I: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The immediate need is for further field studies, for which there is considerable urgency. We have, in the Ituri Forest, a people who are still living one of the earliest forms of life lived by man: hunting and gathering. The extent to which the Mbuti live this life varies from one group to another, but we cannot expect to find a pure hunting and gathering economy among them much longer. For some thousands of years the Pygmy lived this life free from any outside influence. In historic times various village tribes invaded his forest, bringing different cultures and different economies with them. More recently the Pygmies have been in contact with European civilization, which has already driven one major road, and a number of secondary roads, right through the forest. Luckily, no effective attempt was made by the Belgians, until the last two years of their administration, to change the Mbuti way of life, and there is still ample forest to permit a hunting and gathering economy. What emerges from a study of this

Turnbull S-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.147-C]

particular contact situation is not only the remarkable adaptability of the Mbuu to the changing world around them, but also the superficiality of that adaptability, and their much more profound resistance to any influence that strikes into the heart of their forest world and forest life. This, however, is a matter for another work. 177 182.

Physical anthropology has been entirely excluded from the survey because of its highly specialized nature. A number of such specialists have worked in the Ituri area, however, notably Gusinde (1942, 1948), Jadin (1936, 1938), and Julien (1954, 1956). Schebesta (1938) has also made a physiometrical study among the Mbuti. 114 14 128

The only changes that have been made in the original survey have been minor literary alterations, the addition of a few footnotes or inserted comments, the addition of one or two post-1956 references, and a revision of the terminology used. For "Efe" and "Sua," for instance, we now use the terms "archer" and "net hunter" respectively, and in place of "Negro" we use "villager," thus stressing throughout the significance of the economic rather than the linguistic or racial differential. 128 114 101 128

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1961-1965) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ENVIRONMENT

[P.164-A]

136 Both Schebesta and Putnam agree on the
137 profound importance of the environment,
182 which is the same throughout the Ituri, in determining to a great extent the life and thought of these forest people. In the primary rain forest there is little seasonal change. Different species of fruits, edible fungus, nuts, roots, and vegetables may flourish more abundantly at one time than another, but there is ample food of this kind at all times. The game is not migratory, except within very small areas, and
182 is always plentiful. The combination of warmth and humidity that produces this lush environment, with its plentiful supply of food for the Mbuti hunters and gatherers, also adds directly to their material comfort. In the absence of climatic extremes the Pygmy is little troubled by problems of clothing or shelter. All his basic needs are attended to for him by his environment, a fact that, writes Schebesta (1952, 42) does not favor "cultural evolution," but the hallmark of hunting and gathering communities is in any case one of "*la primitivité conservatrice*."

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1961-1965) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

182 114 [15] [181] [184]

trice." Schebesta (1952, 42–43) also believes that the forest environment induces fear, suspicion, and guile, and limits the intellectual horizon of the Mbuti. Putnam is not entirely in agreement with this view. He regards Schebesta's archers as a particularly stagnant group, witnessed by the fact that they speak only one language, whereas nearly all other Mbuti speak several (Schebesta, as mentioned above, regards this factor as an indication of their purity), and also by their inadequate individual hunting technique, which, as Schebesta himself states (1933, 28; 1952, 100–101) contributes a bare third of their food and, he writes, renders them dependent on the villagers for plantation products. These remarks are not quite consistent with his statement that the exuberance of the vegetation assures these bands of gatherers a far more stable and sufficient diet than does the environment outside the forest (Schebesta, 1936b, 79; 1952, 42).

182 825 Putnam associates the lack of seasonal change with a general ignorance among the Pygmies of cyclical activities. For instance, the Mbuti, who observe every detail in their forest home, "are unaware that the aquatic larvae which they eat turn into mosquitoes, nor do they know that the caterpillar turns into a butterfly." [P.164-8]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 164-C]

that the caterpillar turns into a butterfly." 000

The forest throughout is interlaced with 133
rivers and streams, and the terrain is gently un- 182
dulating. These rivers, and the larger of the [166]
streams, seem to form effective natural bound- [823]
aries and may well influence migratory ten- [484]
dencies, as the Pygmy both dislikes large ex-
panses of water and lacks the knowledge of how
to bridge them. Reports of journalists and [491]
others of Pygmy bridge-building activities [177]
(Cotlow, 1956) probably result from recent
attempts, by both villagers and European
movie makers, to teach the Pygmies how to
build swing bridges. Putnam (1948, 325) asserts
that the Pygmy probably never has to go more
than 100 yards to find water. Temperatures 132
throughout the year vary only between a low of
70° F. at night and a possible high of 80° F.
during the day. The forest varies with respect 137
to underbrush but on the whole is unimpeded
virgin growth, with a carpet of leaf mold be-
tween the trees. Where villagers have made a
clearing, however, there is thickly tangled
undergrowth.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

The environment that so favors a hunting and gathering economy also allows the adapted form of cultivation practiced by the villagers who now live in the forest. These village tribes, generally highly segmented and living in relatively isolated communities, cut large clearings and make plantations, the main products of which are plantains, manioc, peanuts, corn, rice, beans, and various kinds of squash. Plantains seem to be the staple food throughout. But the cutting of large clearings opens these villages to the intense heat of direct sunlight, from which the Mbuti never suffer in the uncut forest.

The Ituri is full of all kinds of game, the most important of which for the Mbuti are elephant, various kinds of antelope, forest pig, and monkey. The okapi is also hunted occasionally, though the Pygmies know that to do so is prohibited by game laws. It is in any case a difficult animal to catch and is pursued only if an easy opportunity offers. Danger comes in the form of forest buffalo, leopard, and a number of poisonous snakes such as the Gaboon viper and the horned viper.

There is a profusion of wild flowers and or-

[P. 164-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.165-A] There is a profusion of wild flowers and orchids and many different kinds of vine. The Mbuti make great use of various species of *Ficus* for the manufacture of barkcloth, and certain vines are used to make string and hunting nets. There are also trees that give a sap which, if taken from one part of the tree, can be used as a cooking oil and, if taken from another, can be used either as an adhesive or as fuel for a torchlight. The Mbuti have a knowledge of effective medicines prepared from plants and roots, and also of poisons.

Schebesta (1952, 95–147), in response to persons who hold that the Mbuti have no culture of their own (e.g., Kerken, 1944), points to their remarkable adaptation to the forest environment. The level of their culture may not be high, but, even though primitive and "conservative," it is distinctly a forest culture and distinctly Pygmy. Their needs are few, and raw material is abundant. The striking thing is the minimal extent to which they utilize this material. Both Schebesta (1952, 98) and Putnam attribute this to the super-sufficiency of the environment itself which, making minimal demands, is accorded a minimal response. Mate-

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

221 [p. 166-A
361 From Schebesta (1952, 148–149), it would seem
[184] that archer camps are very much more variable
both in size and duration. Although their time
[261] is fully occupied by the requirements of their
[251] hunting and gathering existence, the Mbuti
never have any fear of shortage and conse-
181 quently have no need to store. Theirs is a
182 strictly diurnal economy. This fact, and the
abundant way in which the forest satisfies their
basic needs, not only directly affect their ma-
terial culture (and indirectly their social
structure) but also, to some extent, their social
behavior and their religious thought.

182 The present report is not the place to pursue
121 the question of the effect of environment on
personality and behavior, a study more prop-
erly in the field of psychology than social
anthropology. But it is worth emphasizing the
probable importance of the environment in this
respect, as it becomes especially significant
when we study the religious life of the Mbuti.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

182
121 It is also significant in considering the relative systems of values of the Mbuti and the villagers, in so far as it develops certain qualities in the Mbuti that further accentuate their physical difference from their village neighbors. Just as the forest itself stands out in sharp contrast to the plains, so the forest people stand out in contrast to the plains people—even those who have made a notable adaptation to a forest environment such as the Ituri village tribes. The value in emphasizing the importance of environmental considerations lies not in any causal explanation of material culture or social structure offered by such considerations, but in creating an awareness of this very fundamental opposition.

[P. 166-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.166-C]

182.
[829]
[51]

According to Mbuti opinion the villager is deficient in the senses of sight, smell, hearing, and touch. There is little doubt that the Pygmy is extra-sensitive in these respects, but no scientific investigation has been conducted as yet to determine the exact extent. But if the environment favors a certain type of physical development, it also favors a certain type of emotional development. We must think of the forest not only as a place of abundance, offering a sufficiency of food and shelter, relatively free from danger, but also as a closed world, very unlike the open world of the plains dwellers. Not only has the Pygmy little incentive to develop beyond his diurnal economy, each day taking care of itself, but also he has little to make him think except in terms of the present.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The past and the future pale into insignificance when compared with the moment. To understand this isolated, self-sufficient Pygmy world of the moment is also to understand something about the Mbuti relationship with the villager living in a very different, expansive, and uncertain world of change. 182 •

It seems worth mentioning the environmental factor also because the Pygmy himself takes it into consideration. His myth and mime, both important mediums of expression of the Mbuti, accentuate the opposition between the forest and the outside world, and between their peoples. They show a constant effort on the part of the Mbuti to effect a satisfactory relationship with the forest world that dominates their lives with such certainty and inevitability. It is not necessary to consider the environment further, but we must go this far in order to begin to understand the people whose society we are studying. 182 778 [538] 182

[P. 166-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

P Z 575 562 The society plays a part in social life by chastizing rebels, particularly women (Schebesta, 1948). All whom Schebesta (1937) questioned assured him that the primary object of the society was to keep the women in their place, mainly by stealing food from them for the society to feast upon. It is perhaps also worth mentioning that Schebesta (1937, 101) P Z [178] writes: "Nowadays in the main a *toré* meeting place is just a home for hen-pecked husbands. . . . It has no connection in any way with the ceremonial of tribal initiation."

He modified these views in his later work (Schebesta, 1948, 492 ff.) but used the same evi- P Z 575 dence. He finds a definite connection between 88] the *toré* society and the *nkumbi* "circumcision 177 initiation." The latter, he says, is founded on 114 the same belief in *toré* but has taken a villager form. Circumcision above all is a villager custom and has nothing to do with Mbuti initiation. Originally, the Mbuti knew only the association of *toré*, which integrated the young men into the adult group of *toré* hunters.

As far as can be seen from this material, the P Z *toré* society has both social and magico-religious 575 functions. Its primary social function is the con- 182 trol of the womenfolk of any one Mbuti band [562] (who, it will be remembered, come from varied bands and do not have the same communal feeling as the menfolk). Schebesta mentions the P 575 fact that, when a meeting of the Mbuti *toré*

[O. 184-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 226-C]

tinue until first light, according to the Putnam material. Once a meeting is begun, it may continue nightly for as long as a month. It is obligatory for all members to attend, and those who are away visiting return to take part. Visitors in the camp also take part if they qualify as hunters. Men, and more particularly youths, sometimes improvise headdresses of cane and feathers (Fig. 50), similar to those worn by village men and women during initiation festivities. Putnam says that food may be prepared for the men by a woman (it is not known who), but that she never appears and has no other function in the proceedings.

In my own experience the words of the songs that are sung by the *molimo* are not supplicatory but are mainly repetitions of one or other of the names of the God of the Forest, or affirmations of his goodness and omnipotence. The songs are, nonetheless, effective means, as far as the Mbuti are concerned, of securing an end to the crisis. The purpose of these meetings is undoubtedly to restore the normality to a community which in some way or another has deviated.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

the body (p. 238). There is also some confusion among the net-hunter Mbuti between the terms *mungu* and *satani*, which at times appear to be interchangeable. Schebesta (1948, 493) says that the local Bira refer to these forest sprites as "*molimo*," the name they also give to their secret association of men.

As with the archers, abnormal conditions of the physical world denote the presence of the chthonic God. At such times the net hunters are careful not to expose themselves to his sight, which would bring death, nor to attract his attention by unseemly behavior. He is a benevolent God but one best kept at a distance. There is no evidence of any connection between God and the lineage through the elder, but each hunting band seems to regard Mungu, while God of all Mbuti everywhere, as being particularly concerned with them.[1]

Cult Practices

In so far as ritual is a response to uncertainty or crisis, the net hunters have far less need of it than many other peoples. As we show above, their forest environment provides them with

[1] In view of the extremely loose usage of the term *mungu*, I interpret net-hunter expressed attitudes as indicating a belief in a local deity, not necessarily named Mungu, somehow related to the over-all God.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P-237-C]

the basic necessities of life. No seasonal change involves them in any significant change of activity (except possibly the honey season, when game hunting may be abandoned). The economy of the Mbuti further militates against elaborate ritual by preventing the easy manufacture of ritual trappings and by not allowing for any substantial form of sacrifice. Nor is it possible to provide time and men for ritual specialization. This much applies throughout the Ituri. However, the net hunters, by their hunting techniques, are assured of a larger and steadier supply of game than the archers. Nevertheless, crises occur. The Mbuti, for instance, are frequently beset with the tempestuous rainstorms that sweep the forest in the afternoons and, more rarely, during the night or early morning. Putnam (1948, 338) points out that these storms not only cause physical discomfort in the hunting camp, where huts may become flooded and the clearing so swamped in mud that the whole camp must be moved, but they also prevent hunting and bring death through lightning or through causing dead branches to fall on people. Putnam writes: "No other element in their life causes so much disturbance or upsets them so profoundly" (1948, 338).

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

ENVIRONMENT

P 182 184 The importance of environment in this particular study cannot be overestimated. The forest environment throughout the Ituri is much the same, so it cannot be held responsible for such differences as we may find between one Mbuti group and another. Such differences seem more likely to be due to the human environment, that is to say, varying degrees of Pygmy association with different villager tribes.

P 182 The forest environment is important, however, in favoring the specific way of life followed by the nomadic hunting-and-gathering Mbuti communities. That it certainly does not compel [Z 182] this mode of existence is witnessed by the very different and equally successful adjustment made to it by the other major group of forest P 182 177 inhabitants—the villagers. But by enabling the Mbuti to continue their nomadic way with comparative ease and to their almost entire satisfaction, the forest enables them to preserve their independence in the face of technologically superior and politically more organized villager opposition. By virtue of their particular response to the forest, the Mbuti retain their individuality socially, economically, politically, and intellectually.

P Z 182 The environmental factor sharply divides the forest people (Mbuti) from the non-forest people (villagers)—the true forest hunting-and-

[P 243-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P. 243-C]

gathering economy of the former from the adapted forest cultivation of the latter. Perhaps, above all, it distinguishes the values of the forest people from those of the villager invaders from the plains. The Mbuti adapt themselves to their environment; the villagers adapt the environment to their own way of life in so far as they can, compromising when they cannot. It is not difficult to see the possible psychological implications of this attitudinal difference and the profound difference in religious and social values that either rise from it or are strengthened by it. In the opposition between forest values and non-forest values we find the highest degree of opposition between the Mbuti and their villager neighbors.

P 182
P 181 182.

THE SOCIAL UNIT

P 184

At this elementary point in our survey of Mbuti society, we begin to find significant structural differences between one group and another. These differences are not related to linguistic differences. Moreover, we find that, with the possible exception of the archers described by Schebesta, the Mbuti are polyglots.

P 184 197

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

While there may be one preferred "camp language," most of the members of any one camp speak three different languages with more or less equal fluency. Each individual's linguistic abilities depend to some extent on the direction of his kinship ties and to some extent on his attachment to one villager tribe or another. The differences in social organization can be related directly to differences in hunting technique. Concerned as we are with the situation as we find it, we need not deal here with the alleged origin of these hunting techniques nor the relative "purity" of the Pygmy groups practicing them.

The immediate and most obvious difference found in a comparison of the accounts of the archers and the net hunters is in the size of their hunting bands which is related directly to the requirements of the particular technique. A distinct process of fission and fusion related to the economic size of the band is observable among the Epulu Pygmies. A successful net hunt cannot be carried out with fewer than seven nets, with an optimum of about 15. When a net-hunting band falls below 10 families (i.e., 10 married men with nets), hunting becomes difficult, because there is little allowance for sickness, or for the men and women required to

[P. 243-D]

[P.244-A]

184 remain in camp to guard it and perform other
224 duties. When the band falls below seven fami-
621 lies, it can no longer exist. Similarly, when it
• 182 rises above a certain number (between 20 and 30) it becomes too unwieldy to function as a single hunting unit and must, of necessity, split. Under these circumstances a compromise is reached, and very conveniently so, by the hunting from a forest camp by one section of the band, while the other section lives a more or less parasitical life near the village.

184 The composition of the bands of archers and
621 net hunters seems to be similar, though Putnam lays more emphasis on the presence of visiting families. The archers live in considerably smaller bands, some interconnected through kinship ties and also allegedly through common allegiance to a villager lineage. In the larger net-hunting band there may very likely be no single villager attachment.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

182 With regard to material culture and tech-
184 nology, there is far more uniformity than divergence. The technology of the net hunters demonstrates a greater adaptation to the forest environment, and their material culture is consistent with the fact that they are more truly
[482] nomadic than the archers. Heavy objects such as the mortars and drums mentioned by Schebesta could not be maintained by a nomadic band unless it was always within easy reach of the village.

ECONOMIC LIFE

224 In a comparison of the two major types of
184 hunt, according to which we classify the Mbuti into archers and net hunters, three factors in particular are worth noting:

1. The net hunt, of all the hunting methods described (including the *begbe* beat of the archers), produces both the surest and the largest supply of meat. The inadequacy of archery
[411] among the Mbuti, owing partly to inaccuracy
[177] with their small bows and partly to the gen-
[439] erally poor visibility, may account in part for the greater economic dependence of the archer bands on their villager neighbors.

2. The net hunt is essentially a cooperative
224 activity, requiring the participation of the band
458 as a whole, including women and children. It
62 reinforces the strength of the band as such; it
562 does not differentiate between the relationships
184 of the men and the women toward the forest; and it establishes for each sex a basic and

[R 244-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

A fourth factor might be added: While the net hunt quickly scares animals away from the area around the hunting camp, necessitating frequent changes of site, the archery technique neither depletes the game so quickly nor frightens it away. An archer band can therefore remain confined to a smaller area, near the village, while the net hunters sometimes must wander several days' march away from their patrons. The more nomadic group also has constantly fresh supplies of vegetable growth at its disposal, thus decreasing the need, which is apparently felt by the more settled archers, for plantation products.

Thus at once we can see the possible economic, social, and political implications of the difference in hunting technique and how these implications follow in fact.

Gathering occupies a similar position of social and economic importance in each type of community. It is regarded primarily as the work of women, though, wherever it calls for tree climbing, it is undertaken by men. Among

[P 244-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 245-c]

mere outward expression of an inevitable relationship brought about by territorial propinquity. It would certainly seem, from both accounts, that there is no question of necessity on either side. The Mbuti *can* gather all they need, and the villagers *can* hunt, without having to go far into the forest, by using traps, pits, spear falls, and other means.

SOCIAL LIFE

We indicate above some of the differences in social life that may be attributed to differences in hunting technique, notably because of the cooperative nature of the net hunt. In the material considered in the section on Social Life (pp. 211–223), these differences may be observed more directly. There is not only greater parity between the sexes among the net hunters, but also the father enters more fully into family life than among the archers. We would connect this difference with the lesser importance of the lineage among the net hunters. Schebesta (1948, 306–307) describes a "local group" (i.e., an economic hunting unit) as being primarily a lineage, under the authority of the

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

551 Thus in the Epulu region most Mbuti have both Ngwana and Bira names, not necessarily with
[613] the same meaning. The occasional use of a
[302] grandfather's name is another indication of the lack of importance attached to lineal ties in this group, and an indication of the size of the largest group to which they conceive of themselves as belonging. Clan names (ancestor names) exist, but these seem to have little social significance. Place names are used frequently to differentiate one hunting band from another.

621 It is virtually impossible to distinguish any
563 of the alien families that have attached themselves to a net-hunting band, so completely are
[832] they assimilated. Perhaps the easiest indication would be open flirtation between members of the opposite sex within a hunting band. And
621 finally (see below, p. 257, for a fuller treat-
575 ment), there is the *elima*, the women's religious
562 association which unites the women of the band
182 in opposition to the men (regardless of lineage), and at the same time acknowledges the common values of both, so unites them as a single group in relation to the forest. It also unifies the total
[186] band in relationship to the worlds of spirits, animals, villagers, and presumably of other semi-human beings such as Europeans. It never unifies the band in opposition to other hunting bands or lineages.

[P 246- B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Little can be said of inter-band relationships as there are so few data. Neither type of band has any need to cooperate with neighboring bands for the hunt but may do so on rare occasions when there is a particular profusion of game. Among the archers joint hunting would be necessary in order to make use of the *begbe* beating technique. Among net hunters two or more bands might combine either when the individual bands fall below economic level or when a particular profusion of game requires more nets than are possessed by the single band. With the net hunters such association could become permanent, whereas with the archers it would never be necessary as the band is of such small optimum size.

The difference between the archers and the net hunters in their relationship with the villager tribes, as described by Schebesta and Putnam, is one of both degree and kind. We have seen that with their less efficient hunting technique the archers must rely more on vegetable products, and how, with the women's sphere limited to gathering, the women have more time and opportunity for gathering from the villager plantations. The less exhaustive and less noisy

[P 247-D]

[R 248-A]

184 nature of the hunt also makes possible a more
182 permanent settlement near the village. The
224 trade relationship among the archers, then, as-
439 sumes greater importance and is more formalized. Schebesta further understands it as being an inter-lineage relationship. Putnam, while acknowledging its importance also for the net hunters, says that it is interfamilial and can be broken by either side. The net-hunting technique makes more game available for trade, so there is less demand by villagers upon the net hunters than by the Lese of the archers. The necessity of a more strictly nomadic life also militates against permanent and continuous attachment between the net-hunting Mbuti and any one villager "master."

128 Of the legal system no more can be added to the section dealing with authority and leadership. There are simply not enough data even for comparison of the concepts of property and ownership between the two groups.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

P
177
881
861
Z
[563]

they could quite well achieve in their own way. Such practical benefits as there may be do not demonstrate why the Mbuti should participate in the villager *nkumbi* any more than does the often alleged subordination of the Mbuti to villager authority and custom. The obvious rejection by the Mbuti of the significance attributed to the *nkumbi* by the villager and the relatively passive acceptance by the villager of this rejection serve only to emphasize the hiatus between the two people. They certainly do not demonstrate that the *nkumbi* serves to draw them closer together or to assert the authority of the villager over the Pygmy.

P
Z
181
182
881

This hiatus becomes even more evident when we consider the religious aspect of the *nkumbi*, as far as the Mbuti are concerned. It is a hiatus not only between two ways of living but between two ways of thinking, and it shows that we are dealing with two totally different sets of values. What the *nkumbi* achieves for the village boy bears little resemblance to what it achieves for the Pygmy. Ceremonial, ritual, and magic are ways of interpreting or influencing the supernatural in terms of the natural, and in his forest environment the Pygmy has relatively little need of either. It is not surprising then that his attitude to the ceremonial and ritual of the *nkumbi* differs from that of the villager. To

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The primary purpose of the *molimo* for the Pygmies is to maintain and to restore normality in the forest. (We must ignore its possible social function at the moment because of insufficient information.) It fulfills its purpose through song and by the use of the *molimo* horn. The association may meet informally any evening as the men sit around the main campfire. They may sing *molimo* songs as well as hunting songs, but the horn will not be heard. Women and children are not excluded from the group, though, as is their normal habit, they usually keep to their own individual firesides. The association meets formally following any crisis such as death, serious illness, or exceptionally poor hunting. Women and children are then rigidly excluded, and the *molimo* horn is used. These formal occasions compel the attendance of all members. Adult members of the hunting band who are away come back; adult male visitors to the camp take part.

There is no formal body of magical belief and practice among the net hunters, nor, according to Schebesta (1952, 337), among the archers.

[P. 256 - D]

The function of these associations is to regulate the relationship of these Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the normality of that relationship and to restore it when disturbed, by rousing the God of the Forest from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of formal meetings of the men's association. This god is the source of good and bad, and it is therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no formal supplication phrased in words as such.

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from village association with similar names and from whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi* initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is part of the mutual attempt of two peoples forced together by historical reasons and present territorial juxtaposition to regularize their relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade is another such expression of their relationship; it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two sets of values (those of the villagers and those of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his own religious association nor accord him any status in his own society. It enables him to move as an adult in villager society and gives the two peoples some common ground involving a superficially subordinate position for the Mbuti.

1, [Molimo and Elima associations --Analyst]

[P. 258-C]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Finally, it is worth taking very brief note of the function of music among the net-hunting Mbuti in so far as it throws light on their participation in the *nkumbi* and village society in general. 533 182

Music in the forest is almost entirely vocal. Drums may be used if within easy reach of the village, from which they are borrowed or stolen. [534] But drums are never used for formal meetings of the *molimo* and *elima*; rhythm is given out by wooden clappers. None of this song can be said to be secular, as it is all related to the forest. The extreme importance attached to song is most plainly seen in its usage for the *molimo* and *elima*. It is mentioned above in the survey how the Mbuti consecrate a marriage ceremony that is performed in the village according to villager custom, by singing the songs of the *elima*, welcoming the bride to the women's religious association in her new home. We also see how the *elima* songs mark the arrival of Mbuti girls at the age of puberty. *Molimo* songs mark

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any major crisis affecting the community as a whole. But, as well as these religious activities, both major economic activities, hunting and gathering, are also consecrated by special types of song. It is inconceivable that the Mbuti, who accompany every important event in their lives with song, should not consecrate the initiation of their boys in this same way. But for the *nkumbi* they have no music at all. As we have said, in 1954 the *molimo* horn was not heard, and no *molimo* songs were sung. I suggest that other initiations, in which the horn and songs are heard, are in connection with villager institutions to which the village boys are being initiated. The only conclusion we can draw is that for the Mbuti the *nkumbi* is not sufficiently significant in their forest life to merit consecration by forest song.

This is closely paralleled by the absence of forest music (songs of the *molimo* and *elima*, hunting-and-gathering songs) when the Mbuti are camped on the edge of a village. When they do, the Mbuti themselves behave as different people. In the forest they feel and observe a certain restraint. Their songs are related to and emphasize their supreme value—the forest. Their daily activities are dominated by the forest and the hunt and the need for close cooperation.

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difficult to define. Perhaps the nearest approach is to say that, while trickery is not a human quality, it is one that the human (i.e., the Pygmy) can cultivate and use to deal with those to whom it properly belongs—animals, *satani*, and in certain circumstances the villagers.

Another significant feature in this collection of legends is the total absence of reference to witchcraft and sorcery. This is also reflected in daily life, where magical practices are almost non-existent. We are here considering the legends, so shall not digress with a discussion of Mbuti magic, but it seems appropriate to mention the coincidence of two deficiencies—a lack of any real body of traditional folklore, on the one hand, and a lack of traditional magical belief and practice, on the other.[1] Legends are invented *ad hoc* or altered and adapted to suit varying circumstances. Even when answering questions, the Mbuti often invents a myth and tells it as though it were fact. The recounting of an incident during a hunt or while honey gathering often appears in the form of a legend. There

[1] The possible correlation of these two was suggested during a discussion with Dr. Michael Smith at the University of the West Indies. Though he cannot be held responsible for the exact interpretation given here, I am grateful to him for the stimulus.

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538 is no standard body of folklore; it is rather a
• 182 matter for individual, spontaneous invention or
789 adaptation. Now it is reasonable to suppose that a standard folklore is associated with magical belief, for magical belief is no more than a socially accepted way of explaining the otherwise inexplicable. If the reason cannot be clearly seen, it is invented and at least clearly understood. With the Mbuti such is not the case.
[761] There is no common explanation of death or
[754] illness in terms of witchcraft or sorcery. A man
[154] invents his own legends; he invents his own explanations for abnormal occurrences. The
538 nearest approach to standard mythological
776 rationalization is perhaps the popularly accepted myth concerning *satani*. Yet *satani* are not malevolent (they do not wish disease and death on people). Though it is their nature to be dangerous, they are dangerous only when seen. They are essentially tangible. They work in a perfectly understandable way and can be counteracted in an equally intelligible manner.

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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538 171 181 Mbuti on the food quest, their lack of interest in the past, with a corresponding lack of interest in lineage or tribal ancestry, and an opposition typical of forest people between the animal and the human worlds, more significant differences appear in the legends. One such difference [186] is, of course, the way the Mbuti tend to class the villagers with the animals, in association with the spiritual world, the world of trickery, [078] in opposition to the human world. Then there is the contrast between the Pygmy attitude to the forest as the provider of all that is good as well as bad, and the attitude of the villagers who regard the forest as a place to be feared, the abode of evil. This contrast is heightened by the different magical and religious approaches of the two people. The legends tend to confirm 538 182 771 171 the validity of my suggestion that the prime function of the Mbuti magico-religious system is to maintain normality in the relationship between the people and the forest. The villagers seem more concerned with disorders and abnormalities and appear to have no such use of song as that I have described for the Mbuti, making greater use of witchcraft and sorcery.

538 121 To understand the meaning fully in each type of legend, we need to know who told it, to whom, with what accompanying mime, to what effect, and under what circumstances. Given such surrounding details, we could use legends and allied arts to analyze that extremely diffi-

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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hunters rather than as Efe, Aka, or Sua—the linguistic division made by Schebesta which does not correspond to any sociological division. It may well emerge that there is a better classification, according to structural principles rather than purely economic differences, but at the moment this cannot be seen.

The survey also reveals a strange contrast between an apparently simple social structure and primitive material culture and a highly developed artistic sense. It seems worth while for the future field worker to pay particular attention to myth and mime, noting all the surrounding circumstances and not only the subject of representation. Similarly music is of obvious social importance and should be fully treated, with special attention to the social context. We might in this way gain some insight into the Mbuti system of values, which not only would be of significance itself but would immeasurably help our understanding of the relationship between the Mbuti and the villagers.

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In treating the Mbuti art forms, we must determine both their function and their meaning, to see how far they form part of the social structure, possibly as regulative mechanisms, and the values they express, maintain, or enforce. In so doing we can reach the heart of the Mbuti magico-religious system which promises, from the material presented here, to be of particular interest and to provide useful material for comparison with the magico-religious systems of other forest peoples, hunters and gatherers.

The Mbuti-villager relationship is probably the major problem that arises from the survey. We try to show, particularly by citing the 1954 *nkumbi* initiation, that this relationship is not a straightforward symbiosis based on necessary trade amounting to a division of labor between the two people. Such a division of labor exists, but it is an outward symbol of the relationship rather than its inner core. In studying this problem we are studying social change which is likely to assume a different form for each hunting band we consider. There are practical grounds for the difference between the relationship of the archers to their villager neighbors and that of the more nomadic net hunters to

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not surprising, then, that the Mbuti recognize their dependence upon the forest and refer to it as "Father" or "Mother" (I have heard both used, it seems without discrimination) because, as they say, it gives them food, warmth, shelter and clothing, just like their parents. What is, perhaps, surprising is that the Mbuti add that the forest also, like their parents, gives them affection.

If it has been thought that this stress on the environmental factor is overweighted, the last observation should make it clear why. The forest is more than mere environment to the Mbuti. It is a living, conscious thing, both natural and supernatural, something that has to be depended upon, respected, trusted, obeyed and loved. The love demanded of the Mbuti is no romanticism, and perhaps it might be better included under "respect," but I make the distinction here because the Mbuti make the distinction, and because it is all part of the structural relationship of opposition between the Mbuti and the villagers.

More of the intimacy of the relationship between the Mbuti and the forest will emerge as we proceed; indeed there is not a single aspect of their lives where it is not evident. Here let us take a quick look at the relationship of the neighboring villagers to the same forest.

In the Ituri the tribal composition is thoroughly confused, a succession of invasions from different directions having taken place over the past four hundred years. From the north came the Mangbetu, pursued later and driven westward by the Zande. At the present day these two large tribes stretch right across the northern edges of the forest, a large proportion of each remaining in relatively open savannah. Also in the north and in the east are the populous Budo and the Mamvu-Lesé. From the southeast came the Bira, a Bantu-speaking plains people who split on reaching the forest, some pressing up by Lake Albert and retaining something of their cattle culture[1], the others turning westward through the middle of the forest, segmenting into a number of isolated villages loosely held together by the principle of patrilineal descent and recognition of a common ancestor manifest in the chiefs and sub-chiefs. In recent years, apparently since the imposition of Belgian authority, the Forest Bira (the Plains Bira do not concern us here, directly) divided into two main chieftainships, with territorial headquarters at Koki and Bahaha. (Map 5 illustrates

[1] There is some uncertainty as to whether the Bira were originally cultivators or pastoralists. Among the present Plains Bira, however, cattle plays an important role and the people themselves claim to have always had cattle. They now practice a mixed economy.

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not totally ineffective. Mbuti genealogical perspective is limited, to say the least, and from their point of view any allegiances formed by a deceased grandfather are of minimal significance, if indeed they are even remembered. In terms of kinship, neither man nor woman will be able to name their great-grandparents, nor may they even be able to name any brothers or sisters of their grandparents unless they have a vivid personal recollection of them. The only occasion on which it would be of any significance for them to know such details would be marriage, and there the parents of the youths concerned will have the necessary access to the (for them) parental, genealogical level by which the permissibility or otherwise of marriage is determined.

Thus the Mbuti can accept with perfect ease, and even with conviction, the villager notion of hereditary ownership. That is not to say that they acknowledge the obligations claimed by the villagers, but only that they recognize kinship as being the basis by which the villagers determine the relationship. An Mbuti who has only temporarily changed allegiance (and at this point I should make it clear that permanent changes are by no means taking place every day) may continue to respect his permanent allegiance, even to the point of sending his hereditary *kpara* occasional gifts of meat or honey. If he changes his allegiance permanently, however, it will be because of some major disagreement, rather than simply because of a temporary shift of residence on either side, and in that case all previous bonds are broken and the Mbuti will leave it up to the villagers to settle the matter between them.

In the belief that kinship is of as vital concern to the Mbuti as it is to themselves, and carries the same indissoluble obligations and rights, the villagers seek to reinforce their relationship with the Mbuti by bringing them as closely into the village kinship system as possible. This is sometimes done by direct intermarriage, a male villager taking an Mbuti wife, but never the reverse. In this case the offspring are considered in every respect as villagers, by both Mbuti and the villagers themselves, but the wife is still Mbuti, with relatives in the forest, and therefore in a good position to attract meat and honey. But it can be seen that it may also cause a further conflict of interest, as it will attract to the villager's household a number of Mbuti relatives who technically may owe allegiance to other villagers, yet who cannot be debarred from showing concern for their sister. In such a case the Mbuti relatives are entitled, and indeed expected, to

ties to villagers, and villager supernatural sanctions enforce fulfillment.

From the Mbuti point of view, however, the whole *nkumbi* is *mbafu* (stupid) and *bulé* (empty), and so are the sanctions. The initiates and their "fathers" who attend them during the ceremony take every opportunity to mock the procedure (Turnbull, 1957[2]), and as stated earlier the *nkumbi* in no way alters the status of the initiates back in their forest world, where they are still regarded as children. In all the *nkumbi* that I have witnessed in different parts of the forest, among different tribes, with varying proportions of Mbuti/Villager initiates, and under divers degrees of severity of village control, I have not seen one indication of genuine respect or belief on the part of the Mbuti, and not one instance of the initiation having the slightest structural relationship to the Mbuti forest world.

Yet by undergoing the *nkumbi* the Mbuti place themselves in a position of ritual inferiority and subordination to the villagers. They do not have any ritual specialists of their own to perform the *nkumbi*, so are wholly dependent upon the village doctors. As the *nkumbi* only perpetuates the status differential, it gives the Mbuti knowledge of tribal lore but does not grant them access to mastery of the lore. Not being full kin, but only adopted, parallel kin, the Mbuti can never qualify as ritual specialists, and are therefore at once forced by the *nkumbi* into participation in innumerable other tribal rituals, and at the same time denied any measure of ritual control and placed in a position of still greater dependence upon the villagers.

Once again the villagers cannot conceive of life without the necessary ritual observations, and in a sense they feel an obligation to provide these services for the Mbuti, but the Mbuti avoids actual dependence by adopting only the outer form of the institution, not the system. Insofar as we are discussing the village world, however, from the villager's point of view the *nkumbi* places the Mbuti in the greatest possible condition of dependence by creating an obligation to take part in a ritual life in which he will need village ritual specialists. It also provides the villagers with the surest method of control, through supernatural sanctions. The villagers have such belief in these sanctions that they are content to allow the Mbuti to get away with much trickery, convinced that sooner or later the score will be evened and restitution made.

Having drawn the Mbuti into the world of the village supernatural, because it *is* of the village, the villagers feel they have established ultimate if not immediate control.

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ultimate if not immediate control. It is more difficult to see what the Mbuti get out of it, except for certain economic advantages which are meant to be reciprocal. Looking at it briefly from the Mbuti point of view, however, we see that the advantages are perhaps more real than those accruing to the villagers. For the villagers are bound by their own sanctions, and therefore the Mbuti can make demands of his *karé* with reasonable assurance that they will be met. Also, he can now expect a succession of relatively lavish ceremonies to be prepared for him as he goes through life, at the expense of his *karé* and *kpara*. The feasting involved may seem a trivial gain for the Mbuti, but in fact it is one of their major sources of entertainment and relaxation. The *nkumbi* extends the Mbuti's economic and political horizons just as it does those of the villagers, and the Mbuti know how to reap the advantages, just as they know how to avoid most of the disadvantages. This avoidance in fact forms one of the important features of the over-all structure of their society.

One final advantage that should be mentioned, though its importance is perhaps more personal than social, is that only by participation in the *nkumbi*, or its equivalent among tribes with other forms of initiation into manhood, can the Mbuti become a man in the eyes of the villagers. There is a strongly paternalistic attitude held by villagers toward their Mbuti that is resented by the hunters, who consider themselves more manly than the villagers. The *nkumbi* at least offers them an opportunity for proving their manliness to the villagers, and it sometimes develops into a contest between the Mbuti and the village initiates. And only by participation in the *nkumbi* can the Mbuti acquire the right to be addressed as adults, admitted to the adult *baraza*, and accorded other adult privileges when in the village.

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The villagers do not attempt to exert supernatural control through the women, as they do through the men. While the Mbuti men have nothing comparable to the *nkumbi* initiation of the villagers, the Mbuti women, in the forest world, do have a recognizable and formal way of acknowledging the puberty of a girl. They give it the same name as the villagers (the Bira call it *elima*, the Lesé *peipa*) and in its outer form it appears roughly similar; the occasion at least is the same,

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we have already seen that in place of system and control there is, apparently, only flux and instability that militate *against* system and control.

By flux I refer to the fact that the Mbuti appear to adopt village institutions but not the village system of interrelationships. In this way there is a disconnectedness in the village context of the Mbuti that enables both sides to refer to whichever institution is convenient at the moment to establish a relationship of the moment. Thus an Mbuti may be asked to help one villager on the ground of their *karé* relationship, and expected by another to help because of the hereditary *kpara* relationship. Considerations of simple economic exchange between the same Mbuti and still other villagers may override either of the above considerations at another moment. Thus the Mbuti has a number of possible ways in which he can link himself with the village and the villagers, at different and distinct times. The converse also applies, and if a villager finds his hereditary claims ineffective he may call on other Mbuti because of the *karé* relationship, and so forth.

In view of the nomadic nature of the hunting band and, as we shall see, of its composition, this "system" of flux is the only one that could possibly pertain. But it leads inevitably to instability because of the consequent lack of any one system of control. In the same way that the Mbuti can hop from one conflicting set of relationships to another, so he can hop from one system of control to another. By Mbuti rejection of the total village system and by what proves to be an opposition of a totally different set of values, the villager ultimately is denied virtually all control, and the Mbuti similarly is denied any absolute security in his relationships with the villagers.

However, the loss of control is more serious to the villagers than is the loss of security to the Mbuti, and it is also more complete, for the villagers are themselves bound by the supernatural sanctions through which they vainly attempt to impose control upon the Mbuti. The whole situation is incompatible with the notion of economic interdependence, yet there is no denying the actual relationship between the two groups of people. Nor can one deny that within a framework of flux and instability, the relationship is persistent, so there must be some system. If that system is so evidently unrelated to economic factors, we have to look elsewhere for its focal point.

There are not all that many basic relationships that can exist be-

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There are not all that many basic relationships that can exist between two peoples in a context such as this. Apart from one of symbiosis, implying interdependence, there could be political subjugation, such as existed, say, between the Tussi and the Hutu. But that is plainly not the case here. The villagers themselves admit their inability to exert physical force to bend the Mbuti to their will, for the Mbuti always have the ultimate escape of flight to the sanctuary of the forest. The villagers are completely unequipped to pursue the Mbuti into the forest, and never attempt it. They are incapable of even finding the Mbuti if the hunters wish not to be found. And, as we have seen, there is no effective political mechanism for maintaining any kind of political relationship, let alone one of superordination/subordination.

Another possible relationship would be one of assimilation, such as occurred among the Ganda of East Africa, where two different peoples merged, as did their two different economies. At the present there is no question of actual assimilation, but the existence of linguistic and institutional similarities certainly indicates an interchange of ideas, at least. But it is, at the moment, an interchange of outward forms only, and not of the accompanying systems and structure. And while a great deal of intimacy is expressed, in action as in word, between the two groups, there is also a great deal of expressed opposition, and sometimes hostility.

The intermarriage between Mbuti girls and village men and the attempted absorption of the Mbuti into the village kinship system may be considered as steps toward assimilation, but if so they are very tentative and preliminary steps, and as such need not concern us here. Indeed we shall find that there are other indications of the reverse process, of separation. There is no question of physical separation in the sense of the expulsion of one group by the other, but a perfectly valid alternative relationship left to us for consideration is one of ideological separation accompanied by a mutually accepted territorial separation—a form of indigenous apartheid.

This in fact seems to be the case, for in common conversation, as in action, both groups distinguish the village and the village people from the forest and the forest people. The Mbuti effectively are the only group to cross the territorial boundaries, and the ideological boundaries remain inviolate on both sides. When the Mbuti cross into the village world they leave the forest behind them, and with it they leave their forest social system. Forest values cannot be so easily left

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behind, but in the village world they are dormant, and do not come into play until the two worlds begin to impinge upon each other.

Thus the economic, kinship and political relationships that bind the Mbuti together as a society in the forest do not pertain in the village, and consequently the society disintegrates as such. An example can be had by comparing plans of the forest hunting camps with plans of the village camps over the same period (see Plan 2). It will be seen that there is virtually no correspondence, and that while each successive forest camp (approximately one a month) shows a significant change in structure related to the constant process of fission and fusion and of fragmentation, the village camps show no such pattern. At first they seem much more stable, but that is due at least in part to the fact that the actual camp is more permanent in nature, being occupied for much shorter periods of time. Also, such camps are sometimes built in imitation of the real villages, the houses being made smaller, though of the same semi-permanent mud and wattle construction. It is only the physical disposition that remains constant, however, and that only for as long as the physical camp remains unchanged. This may be for as long as a year or more. During that time the composition of the village camp is constantly changing, according to no discernible pattern, and certainly none related to the composition of the forest camp.

The Mbuti living in a village camp can no longer be considered as a band. Indeed, there are times when the village camp may be fully occupied, as if by a band, but in fact by Mbuti who have nothing more immediately in common than their intent to "eat" those particular villagers. Even considerations of kinship and of age break down, though nuclear families tend to continue to live together. A nuclear family will not co-operate within itself in the same way, however, as it would in a hunting camp; nor, most certainly, will it co-operate with other nuclear families. There is not even the necessity for a wife to cook her husband a meal, as he can always scrounge one from a villager. Whether he does so or not is purely a domestic issue between himself and his family and, as seen, because of the flux that pertains, different members of the same family could choose to establish village relationships, each by invoking a different context—the one *karé*, the other *kpara*, another economic exchange—so even three brothers technically "owned" by the same villager could find themselves attached to three different villagers, possibly living in three different houses (when in the village, the Mbuti sometimes

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sleep in the *baraza* of the villagers rather than in the village camp). The nuclear family is further disrupted by the fact that a wife may well seize the opportunity of being in the village to leave her husband and visit her own *kpara* in another village.

Men and women of quite different ages who would normally, in the forest, be separated for most aspects of daily life may find themselves thrown together. Young and old are quite likely to find themselves eating together on the same *baraza*, helping to build the same house, even joining in the same erotic dance. Sex differentiations that pertain in the forest do not necessarily pertain in the village, where, for instance, Mbuti men do the housebuilding, not the women, and where the women are most effectively the "hunters" and food producers.

It is only, as stated, when the two worlds of the forest and the village impinge upon each other that the Mbuti in the village camp show any sense of identity as a unit. Those who belong to the same hunting band will then cluster together around the same campfire, and if the issue involves a return to the forest, then quickly the village camp begins to assume, so far as possible, the composition and characteristics of a forest camp. Forest relationships between individuals and families are gradually reestablished, and at the same time village relationships are gradually abandoned. This inevitably meets with concerted opposition on the part of the villagers, who offer threats and bribes to maintain the precarious and temporary relationship just established. But with no effective means of control there is nothing they can do but accept the departure of "their" Mbuti with as much good grace as they can muster. Those who are wise make presents of plantains and manioc. Those who do not are likely to have their plantations robbed.

The imminence of a mass return of Mbuti to the forest is frequently marked a night or two before it takes place by the singing in the village camp of hunting songs or, on special occasions, of the lesser *molimo* songs, late at night when all the villagers will have retired. This is a sure sign that the forest world is asserting itself, for forest songs are generally considered as sacred, and not to be profaned by performance in the village. They would never be sung in the true village, and only in the Mbuti village camp when they wish to convert the context to a forest context. The forest, it must be remembered, is physically always within sight and, perhaps more important as far as song is concerned, within earshot. It may, indeed, be no more than

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621 121 discover, at least for the net-hunters of Epulu, what is the structure of this process.

621 613 [611] We have seen that the band is plainly a nonlineal entity; it cannot even truly be called bilateral, as descent is not counted on either side for practical purposes.[6] Lineages are known, and these are always patrilineages, but they seem to have little economic, political or even religious significance. The only time the lineage is mentioned with any frequency is when discussing the merits or otherwise of a proposed marriage, and then it is not the lineage name that is usually mentioned, but rather the names and relationships of the individuals concerned, their parents and grandparents. It can be seen from the plans, in any case, that the process of fission and fusion under discussion is not one that supports the integrity of unilineal descent groups, but rather one that cuts across such groups.

621 613 184 [224] [174] Nor can the nonlineal nature of the band or the flux of band composition be attributed solely to the ecology. The situation is comparable between the archers and the net-hunters, and yet each of these groups practices a different hunting technique, and the process of fission and fusion takes an opposite direction. Either the archers or the net-hunters could, in fact, operate perfectly efficiently without all the internal movement that we have seen, and they may very well once have operated as patrilineal bands. While in no way supporting those who suggest that band composition is due to local ecology, it is undeniable that there is an interest in lineage, evident in the attempt to balance lineages and prevent lineage dominance. Further, the camp plans indicate a general tendency toward lineage solidarity, particularly in times of crisis. For instance, with reference to Plans 9 and 10, the normally unsystematic camp plan that pertained (9) was abruptly altered and became divided along strict lineage lines when one of the sub-band members, Cephu himself, committed the unforgivable crime of placing his net in front of others during the hunt. The only significant relationship of the flux to forest life is that it enables the band to respond to changes in environmental conditions by altering its size. It must also be admitted that it is

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[6] Some misunderstanding may arise owing to different usages of descent-system terminology. Some schools of thought consider "bilateral" as synonymous with "cognatic," and hold that the terms include all affines and do not imply any differences in the method of tracing descent. To such an extent, perhaps the Mbuti band may be termed bilateral or cognatic, but to me, and I believe to others, both terms imply one kind of descent *system* or another, placing an emphasis on lineage that is not characteristic of the Mbuti band and therefore to be eschewed.

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gardless of lineage, depending upon the context. Affinal ties are considered just as legitimate, and used just as frequently in balancing power and in determining allegiance as cognatic ties. In this way security is guaranteed to any individual because of the number of recognized social groups to which he can claim membership. This ambivalence is again an important structural principle, and is certainly manifest in the social groupings observable in the building of successive hunting camps.

If age rather than kinship fixes one's place within the band, then, we have to consider how a band maintains any sense of continuity from one generation to the next. There is the alliance of age groups and the educational role of age groups which provide some degree of continuity, but this would not be sufficient in view of what we have said about the shifting composition of the band. It is undoubtedly territory that gives the band its identity as such and enables that identity to persist, and it is to his territory, as to his age group, rather than to any kin group, that an Mbuti owes allegiance.

Kinship is recognized in assessing problems of inheritance, but with so little to inherit the problems are minimal. In general a man's belongings are divided among his sons or, if his sons are too young, they are held in trust for them by his brothers. Similarly with a woman's belongings. Kinship may also be used to maintain an economic balance, just as it may be used to maintain a political balance, by advancing claims to the spoils of a hunt on the ground of kinship, or indeed by advancing claims for the adoption of children. But again, as such claims are advanced on grounds of both cognatic and affinal ties, the principles of unilineal descent are directly contradicted.

In fact the nuclear family is best regarded as one of a number of cells that make up the totality of the band, each cell reflecting the same basic structure as the band itself. Within the family the factors of territory and age also play a part, the locality of the hut symbolizing the unity of the family and its separateness from others, the age differential dividing the family in activity, authority and allegiance. Even fission and fusion are a part of family life, as children are apt to leave their natal family any time after they reach the age of three or four, and either be adopted by or simply live for a while with another family in the same band; or they may be adopted by a family in another band and go to live there, even if their parents continue living together in their home band. Such separations within the band do not affect their relationship with other members of their family of the

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PUBERTY: THE *ELIMA*

At the next crisis in the life cycle, however, it is the band rather than the nuclear family that takes charge. By early childhood the child has already grown away from its family to some extent, and become more a member of an age group cutting across kinship lines. At puberty the boy or girl may not even be living with kin any more, let alone in the nuclear family. But even if they are, the band takes control of the situation. It is an occasion that concerns the band as such, for adolescence leads into marriage, and marriage will inevitably bring about a significant change in the economic structure of the band. A member of the band may leave it, or a new member may join it, or, if the marriage is within the band, then at least there will still be an additional net, and a change in the hunting and gathering pattern and perhaps in interfamily alliances. The process of fission and fusion might also be affected by the political implications of the marriage. The *elima* is best regarded as a premarital festival. It does not necessarily lead directly into a marriage that is marriage in the sense of a final, childbearing union. It is rather a preparation for marriage, an opportunity for the youngsters to find suitable partners. It does not even have to end in betrothal, so there cannot be said to be a functional connection between *elima* and marriage.

The arrival at puberty among boys being somewhat less easy to determine, the signal for an *elima* is the first appearance of menstrual blood in a young girl. This is something that fills the local villagers with horror, and with fear of evil influences against which they take elaborate ritual precautions to protect themselves. These precautions are costly and inconvenient, and the girl who has brought both shame and annoyance to her family is hidden and treated harshly. There are elaborate cleansing ceremonies for the girl and her family. Among the Mbuti, however, the appearance of menstrual blood is a sign that the girl is now a potential mother, and it is consequently a signal for rejoicing and for preparation for motherhood. Thus an integral part of the festival is the selection of suitable potential husbands. Such selection demands that the boys prove their manhood, since it cannot be proven as simply as is the womanhood of the girl. In this sense, then, the *elima* is a joint initiation of boys and girls into adulthood. Having dealt with it in descriptive form elsewhere (Turn-

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bull, 1960[1]), I shall keep the description here to those essentials concerned with the structural implications of the *elima*.

The fact that it is not an individual family affair, to be concealed with shame as best possible, is doubly emphasized when two girls in a band, of quite different lineages, "see the blood" within a few days of each other. There will then be a joint *elima*. And there is also the selection by the girl or girls of the *bamelima*, the friends she likes and wants to accompany her for the duration of the festival, living with her in the *elima* hut. They will be drawn from her female age mates, and may or may not already have had their own *elima*. If they have not yet seen the blood, participation in their friend's *elima* will excuse them from having one of their own when the time comes. If a girl sees the blood, and a close friend thinks she is about to see it as well, the *elima* will be delayed, perhaps for several weeks.

As with birth, this life-cycle crisis does not evoke any sense of need for urgent ritual action, protective or otherwise. Its significance is of a different order. It is regarded as essentially natural and therefore good. Also as with birth, the personal importance of the occasion leads to an establishment of personal contact with the forest, a reification of the direct bond between the individual and the forest world; but the social importance of puberty for the band is recognized, so the band as such takes certain measures, both social and ritual, to mark the occasion.

The girl or girls with blood are expected to keep to their homes and an extension may be built onto one of their huts, or onto that of any friend or relative who is willing to house the *bamelima*. Every *elima* girl with blood has to choose a personal assistant, and the choice is left entirely to her, and again may fall on a relative, though more often it is a very close friend, of the same age group. They then invite other friends to join them in the *elima* hut, when it is ready. The assistants share such restrictions as are placed upon the *elima* girls, except that they are more free to leave the hut unaccompanied. There are few restrictions anyway, it seems, and they are mainly concerned with maintaining adherence to the schedule of instruction and activities. There are some minor food prohibitions, based on the personal taboos of the *elima* girls and their assistants, which in turn are based on their individual reactions to these foods as young children. If a certain food makes a child sick it may be forbidden to him until puberty, when he may try it again and abandon the taboo if it no longer affects him adversely. Sometimes, but not always, there is

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way to the forest. If the *elima* happens to be in a village camp, as it sometimes is for part of its duration, the girls will still go away off into the forest to sing their songs. The older men and women say that the festival should be held entirely in the forest, but the younger Mbuti point out that it is an occasion for rejoicing and feasting, and so it is much better to be near a village and eat off the villagers. Even when doing that, however, one is likely to come across broken saplings stuck in the ground alongside a trail many hours from the village camp, showing that the *bamelima* passed by there, "rejoicing the forest." Sometimes they may be heard in their peculiar antiphony with the forest, at other times the saplings appear swiftly and silently a few yards from an Mbuti youth as a sign that the *bamelima* are nearby and should not be disturbed. Sometimes youths, thinking they have left the *bamelima* safely in their hut in a village camp, are hours off in the forest in their usual boisterous, noisy way, and will find themselves attacked and chased by the girls, armed with sticks and whips.

Usually the girls are all together, but every now and then one of the *elima* girls and her assistant will go off together into the forest, and stay there for half a day or more. At such times the others sit around looking dejected, and complain of being deserted. The older women then say that they should not complain, that it is good for the girl to go away sometimes and "converse with the forest."

As at birth, there is a certain amount of decoration of the body with what might be considered as forest charms, and toward the end of the festival the girls paint each other with a white forest clay. The personification of the forest, and the frequency with which it is referred to, and the way in which this is done as though its personality were an ordinary matter of fact are another indication of the intense personal importance of the forest in the life of the Mbuti, of its character as a parent, a friend, and a lover, the provider of all things. But it cannot be interpreted as forest worship, for to the Mbuti it is simply a matter of fact.

One thing that is particularly interesting in consideration of the *bamelima* is that while it is very clearly an age group, it does two things. It does not deny individuality to the *elima* girl, who in fact is constantly displaying it and often causing friction as a result, but it effectively consolidates an age group that might otherwise have been rather lacking in cohesion. Girl's activities are, on the whole, less co-operative in nature than those of boys, and whereas boys are clearly formed into co-operative groups before arriving at puberty, this is not

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quite so with the girls. But by the end of the festival bonds have been forged between the *bamelima* that will never be broken and that will provide a firm basis for co-operative activity throughout their lives.

The other thing achieved is that there seems to be at least a temporary obliteration of the bonds of the nuclear family. The nuclear family has no particular responsibility toward the festival, though they will generally contribute more food than others and may offer shelter, and it has absolutely no authority. Further, although relations between brother and sister are free at all times, it is worth noting that in the *elima* house the girls sleep with the boys of their choice openly and without shame, though their own brothers may be among the boys sleeping with other girls beside them. It is difficult, however, to determine whether or not sexual intercourse, which is permissible at this time, openly takes place under such conditions. I am told that it does.

Neither do kinship considerations seem to play any important role, and certainly no predetermined role, in the instruction of the girls. The only roles that are distinguishable as such are the provider of the *elima* hut, the mother of the *elima*, the father of the *elima*, the assistants and the rest of the *bamelima*.

Of these, the *bamelima* are without question an age group with no kinship considerations. The assistants are primarily close friends and confidantes of the *elima* girls, and seem likely to be related distantly, but there are no stated preferences concerning this. It is said that the father of the *elima* does not have to be a relative at all; his job is to use force, if necessary, to stop the somewhat violent altercations that break out among the attendant youths or between them and the *bamelima*. It is said that the mother of the *elima* is usually an elderly relative of the parental or grandparental level, and that the provider of the hut can be anyone willing to put up with the noise. Table 7a shows the kin relationship between these various roles and the *elima* girls in an *elima* held among the Epulu Mbuti at the end of 1957 and into the beginning of 1958. It also shows the relationship of those senior girls who took the most prominent part in the instruction of the *bamelima*. Tables 7b–d show the same relationships on three other occasions among other net-hunting bands.

Instruction, as already mentioned, is in song, and in such of the arts of motherhood as are yet unknown to the girls. The instructors, apart from the mother of the *elima*, are senior members of the same generation as the *bamelima*, and mostly married, or else they are el-

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of the most dramatic festivals possible. The *molimo* is not concerned with the death of the individual, nor with securing safe passage for the soul, but rather with affirming a belief in life and in the continuity of life and in the continuity of the band, despite the fact of death.

It seems, from inquiry in all parts of the forest, that there were many different ways of burying the dead and that no uniform custom existed; rather that, as now, each band had its own preferences. The most common method now, and apparently in the past, is simply to pull the hut down over the corpse, the body having been buried in a shallow pit dug in the ground or simply left on the bed, covered with leaves. In some bands the hut is then burned, in others it is left, but the general practice is to move camp at once. If it is too late to move that day, the family concerned will sleep out in the open until they are able to build a new hut in the next camp.

On some occasions bodies are buried up in trees, and in the south-eastern region of net-hunters this is how the Mbuti say they dispose of dead lepers. Nearly all Mbuti say that in the old days they buried their dead in holes in the ground, filling the holes in afterward so that the animals would not find the bodies. Today it is usual, throughout the forest, to wash the body before disposing of it in any of these ways. But this, and other practices such as scenting the corpse, wrapping it in a cloth if one is available, raising and lowering it three times before burial, and orienting the body in its resting place, vary according to the practices of the local villagers, and are almost certainly to a large extent borrowed from them. The Mbuti seem impatient and unconcerned about such details, and if they attend to them they do so only perfunctorily. They are particularly reluctant to allow anything of any possible value to be buried with a body, and if the burial takes place in a village and the villagers insist on using cloths and sleeping mats, the Mbuti will do their best to retrieve these unseen, at the last moment.

Similarly, head-shaving seems to be of little significance to the Mbuti, though they frequently do shave when a member of the band dies. But, unlike the villagers, they are not consistent in the practice, and they leave their hair lying around where it has fallen to the ground, whereas the villagers are scrupulously careful to collect their own hair cuttings, which they take off into the forest, or to a stream, and secretly hide.

The explanation given for self-mortification is that all the immediate family feel responsible, to some extent, for a death in their midst.

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Cephu was neither a very good nor a very popular hunter, and it may be that he was afforded less cooperation by his fellow hunters as a result. Toward the end of a particularly unsuccessful day, Cephu slipped off and set his net up where it would catch the first wave of animals put up by the beat. He was caught with his spoils, however, and when back in camp there was a gathering of all the youths and hunters and elders (except Moké) at the *kumamolimo* (hearth of the *molimo*), to which Cephu was summoned by calling his name across to the small camp he had built for himself. He was named in the most uncomplimentary terms, and when he finally came to defend himself he was subjected to indignities, even by the youths and children. He was openly accused of stealing food from his fellow Mbuti, and this was something only animals did (note that the anger was of the band at someone having stolen from the band; this to the Mbuti is true theft). All manner of other grievances were brought up against Cephu, particularly his lack of participation in the *molimo* for Balekimito, Ekianga's mother, paternal aunt to Manyalibo and Masisi. Cephu responded that Balekimito was not his mother, and this was the trap into which he had been led. By saying this he disclaimed membership of the hearth, and so his theft became more logical but his act even more reprehensible. Finding himself now both a thief and an outsider, Cephu broke down and offered to return all the meat he had caught. The hunters went with him and stripped not only his hut but those of the three other families in Cephu's camp, leaving Cephu complaining that he would die.

That evening, however, Masisi slipped over in the dark with a peace offering of cooked food[4] and not long afterward Cephu made his way to the *kumamolimo* and joined in the singing for his "mother," Balekimito. This was one of the very rare occasions when a dispute was ended by what might be considered as direct retributive and punitive action by the band.

10. This is not to say that theft of food never takes place. It would be a rare Mbuti woman who did not conceal a portion of the catch in case she was forced to share with others, and occasionally a bachelor like Pepei, with a reputation for being somewhat *wazi-wazi*, was caught stealing a small quantity of food from a cooking pot or from

[4] Prestation is an important though unformalized part of Mbuti life, and a major means of establishing social relationships. Any property except the most personal items, such as used bark cloth, bows and spears, are likely to change hands, and even these personal items may be offered or sought.

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attempt is made to settle the issue in question one way or the other, even verbally, and the equally small number in which direct action is taken. The percentages are given as follows:

DISPUTE	*Number Recorded*	*Number of Decisions or Judgments made*	*Instances of Positive Action*
Food	67	5 (7.5%)	4 (5.9%)
Sex	37	4 (10.8%)	5 (13.5%)
Village	11	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)
Theft	5	3 (60%)	
Territory	4		3 (75%)

These figures indicate the greatest degree of decision, either by the passing of opinions (judgments) or by the taking of action, in the least frequent types of dispute.

In the most common disputes of all, those arising out of trivia and having no particular direction and no specific purpose, it is only about one in a hundred that comes to a head in a way that calls for action or decision, such as the case of the two brothers (34). Such disputes gave frequent opportunity for the voicing of opinions on almost any matter, and acted as a mechanism by which most incipient disputes of a more serious nature were detected and aired before they grew to major proportions.

An examination of all the recorded disputes shows that without a doubt there are forces working toward order in Mbuti society, despite its unformalized nature and the absence of political or legal "systems." Such forces include the compelling demands of the stomach, which suffers directly from any dispute that interrupts the hunting and gathering economy, as any major dispute will; the weight of public opinion, expressed verbally, or through ridicule or mime, or in action such as thrashing (rare, and only for youths) or ostracism and exile. These are the negative forces against antisocial behavior. There are equally positive forces toward social behavior, including the esteem of one's age mates and elders, the affection of children, the contentment of a full stomach and, perhaps above all, the belief in the personal benevolence of the forest.[10] The positive aspect of the

[10] Fortune (1935) describes a parallel situation among the Manus, who, like the Mbuti, respect morality beyond the pressures of social sanctions. Fortune claims that the religious sanctions provide a socially established way of keeping the social sentiment "quick," and of bringing offenders to book without seeming to be personal. The latter aspect of religious sanctions is probably more vital for the Mbuti, where any dispute is

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626
121
182
778

forest as an incentive toward good behavior is far more important and far more strong than its negative aspect as a deterrent against bad behavior.

likely to be highly disruptive but where disputes nonetheless occur. Any personal intervention or judgment would only be likely to lead to further disputes. The impersonal nature of the forest as arbitrator and judge maintains the impersonality of the laws; or if the forest is considered as endowed with personality, it is a spiritual personality and owes no more allegiance to one Mbuti than to another, and so is still impersonal in this context.

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porarily, and is considerably easier to arrange than a reluctant marriage. It can be seen, then, that the kinds of relationship existing between bands for the regulation of marriage are necessarily flexible. More important, marriage between bands provides a formal relationship between the nuclear families concerned and so provides also a basis for interfamilial exchange between those bands. To have such an exchange relationship, on a familial level, is of much more importance than wider political ties to a band which only on the rarest of occasions may need to act in concert, as a band, with the other band.

Trespass

Each hunting territory being economically self-sufficient, there is generally no need for economic cooperation. Boundaries are frequently natural features that restrict effectively the movement of both the hunters and the game, so trespass is also restricted. However, if following especially prized game, hunters will follow it across such boundaries with little or no hesitation. It is even said that if a band's territory is exceptionally unproductive, the band may move into a corner of its neighbor's territory, the furthest removed from wherever that band is camped at the time.

It is understood that in the case of pursuit of quarry a portion of the game will be sent to the resident band. It is equally understood that, if moving into someone else's territory, they should be notified and their permission sought. If either of these provisions is not maintained it may lead to friction, and a delegation of hunters from the offended band will visit the others in their camp, perhaps even staying with them for a few days. The question of who forms such a delegation is again largely an economic matter, for the members have to be drawn from the hunters, and the home band will obviously be unwilling to decrease its hunting efficiency to any significant extent. There is the stated possibility of a resort to fighting with wooden clubs; in one instance a few young hotheads suggested using spears, but this appeared to be more a figure of speech to indicate extreme anger, and was promptly rejected by the older hunters. I have, in any case, come across not a solitary instance of such open hostilities taking place between two bands. The visiting hunters are received with respect, and the trespassing hunters generally say that they intend to fulfill their obligations and, as a sign of good faith, offer to send out a hunt so their visitors can bring meat back to their band. If the host

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self being maneuvered into an awkward situation may suddenly leave altogether and go somewhere else. Neither lineal seniority nor political authority (chieftainship) are ever even mentioned in any attempt to influence a family's movement. When Manyalibo and Masisi, who shared the same grandfather (Manyalibo being the lineal elder), fell out and moved into separate camps, it was Masisi who took the initiative, and although Manyalibo claimed that Masisi ought to respect him because of age, he never suggested that Masisi was subject to his authority. He even stated openly that Masisi had the right to move wherever he wanted, but that it was not good for "brothers" to separate.

Thus interfamily exchange can only be regarded as a direct relationship between two families which, if they happen to be in separate bands, creates a relationship between their respective bands allowing for further such interchanges. Such bands respond to each other's needs with regard to optimum economic size, occasionally cooperate, and possess an additional mechanism for the settlement of interband disputes concerning trespass or marriage exchange.

BAND TO VILLAGE

In examining relationships between the band and the village we find the same distinction, only more clearly made, between formal and informal relationships that are the most effective.

But whereas even latent antagonism between bands is minimal, there is considerable latent antagonism between band and village, manifest not only in opposed systems of economic exploitation but also in opposed systems of values. Open conflict would bring advantage to neither group, and we have to think, in view of the lack of necessary economic interdependence, of the exchange in connection with this antagonism. It does indeed offer each group ample opportunity for insulting the other, though individual exchange relationships sometimes remain amicable, and even intimate, for considerable lengths of time.

The outward objective, at least, of the general Mbuti/Villager relationship is one of economic exchange, for mutual convenience. There are a number of formal levels at which such exchange, and the necessary associated negotiations, may be conducted, using a corresponding number of media:

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draw impressive-looking streaks of blood. She was promptly stopped from "killing" herself, having it explained to her that she was only a witch and could not really help what she had done, and only had to purify herself.

However, the deaths continued and nobody else was willing to take Sau's role, and in the end there was no alternative but to accuse her of sorcery. In village belief, witchcraft substance is normally dormant but may become activated through a number of causes. A witch is a person who possesses this substance but has no control over it. Once discovered, the witch is under an obligation to keep the substance "cool." Sau obviously was not keeping hers cool, and it is said that if very bad people know they are possessed of witchcraft substance they may learn how to control it deliberately, and they then become sorcerers. Sau, then, was accused of deliberate and malevolent use of her witchcraft substance. She was formally condemned to be beaten to death. The Mbuti made a show of beating her but then stopped, telling the villagers that they did not want to kill her as then they would only have her spirit to deal with (using another purely village concept), which would be much more difficult to control. Exile was suggested instead, and Sau was duly exiled, and departed for her own village in great spirits, laden down with foodstuffs.

The deaths had caused the band, which originally had been gathered in the village for a wedding, to depart abruptly for the forest as soon as the Sau incident was over. It took a number of days to prepare themselves, taking fond farewells of their exchange partners, and Ekianga went ahead with three other hunters and their families to select the site. When the rest arrived they found Ekianga comfortably installed, with the sorceress, Sau, happily in an adjoining hut looking after his children. Her position in the forest was in no way changed. She remained a scapegoat, but her right to stay with the band was never seriously challenged, nor were the respect and affection with which she was regarded ever diminished.

The same use of witchcraft was found in other bands, and the same professional scapegoats. The other "witches," like Sau, occasionally made fun of the whole thing by miming all their alleged achievements as witches, including the legendary witch's dance and the casting of the "evil eye." In every case the "witch" occupied an otherwise perfectly normal role in camp life, having no more and no less respect than any other by virtue of being a scapegoat.

In forest life there is no need for witchcraft as a social institution,

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for there are other mechanisms to deal with the situations with which witchcraft, in village life, deals. As indicated, it may play a minor and supplementary role in the dispersal of blame in a dispute, but completely without involving any belief in the actual presence of witchcraft substance. It is highly significant that the concept of supernatural power in this form is utterly foreign to the Mbuti, and this places them in a somewhat disadvantageous position when brought face to face with the village notion of sorcery, and the practice of cursing.

SORCERY

While the Mbuti make limited use of village concepts of magic and witchcraft for their own practical ends, they make no such use of sorcery, having for it a complete abhorrence. The villagers themselves never admit to being sorcerers, for sorcery is by definition antisocial and evil, but they may use the threat of sorcery (pp. 60–62) and claim to have employed a sorcerer against the Mbuti. More likely still, they may seek the aid of the local doctor to effect a curse against the Mbuti for nonfulfillment of their side of a bargain.

From the village point of view there is a world of difference between a sorcerer's curse and a doctor's curse, but from the Mbuti point of view they are one and the same thing. The theoretical and institutional aspects of magic and witchcraft the Mbuti can appreciate and turn to their advantage. Confronted with sorcery they have no recourse but flight. Flight in itself is significant, for it is flight away from the village into the forest or, if already in the forest, then it is flight further into the forest. On the whole it is a firm belief that sorcery is ineffective outside the village, but sometimes circumstances (such as poison) combine to indicate otherwise, and then it becomes a question of proximity to the village. Once again, however, as with magic, we find the Mbuti regarding the forest as a place of refuge, a place where they are sure of protection.

Against witchcraft, all the Mbuti have to do is to acknowledge being witches and go through the necessary purifications; the belief never touches them. Against sorcery, apart from flight, they have no means of defense for there is no counterpart in their experience. Sorcery implies the use of supernatural powers to effect harm on someone. Two concepts are involved that are foreign to the Mbuti: one is that a supernatural power can be used for anything but the social good, and the second is that anyone could wish, anonymously as it

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Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or female, during the ensuing festival (*molimo*), but some of them may be sung at other times of crisis that threaten life, notably sickness or poor hunting. Certain songs seem to be reserved for actual death, but my impression is that this is a matter of personal attitude, for there are other ways in which a distinction is more clearly made between what are called the lesser and the greater *molimo*, the latter being the festival concerned solely with death.

To the same extent that the *elima* songs are of rather more importance to women than men, so are *molimo* songs considered more the concern of men. There is, however, no absolute exclusion. On the contrary, the male youths are an integral part of the *elima* festival, which celebrates their puberty just as much as it celebrates that of the girls, and although the actual festival is occasioned by the physical maturation of the girls, who are then taught the *elima* songs, the male youths are needed to sing the chorus to certain of those songs. In the *molimo*, at one point, the roles of the sexes are reversed (as in *ekokomea*), with the women taking over the men's songs, the men sitting back and listening, like women.

An examination of Mbuti song form not only reveals areas of concern to the Mbuti, such as their food-getting activities, life and death, but it also reveals the concern of the Mbuti for cooperative activity. Each type of song requires a group of people to sing it, and if there is a solo it is sung over a chorus, and the solo is passed around from one individual to another. This is similar to the Mbuti rejection of individual authority and their concern for dispersing leadership as widely as possible. There are certain parts of certain songs that are sung by youths, hunters or elders, strictly according to age, and song form thus also reinforces Mbuti concern for the age differential as an important element of their social structure. The songs are most frequently in round, or canon, form, and the hunting songs, in order to heighten the need for the closest possible cooperation (the same need that is demanded by the hunt itself), are sometimes sung in *hoquet*.[5]

There are certain similarities between the hunting songs and the *molimo* songs, but this is an area that requires a great deal more care-

[5] This is a technique in which each note of the melodic line is taken by a single individual who sings that note alone, at the correct moment. The melodic line is thus literally divided among the participants (sometimes singing in groups of two or three), and the melody can only be reconstituted and heard by the cooperation of all. The complications are heightened by the use of canon, and by the use of a harmonic pattern which is also sung in *hoquet*, and proceeds clockwise as the melodic line proceeds, as always, counterclockwise.

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"to call the bees" (in the sense of attracting their attention, not of summoning them). The belief is that these whistles will halt the game or the bees, so that they may be found more easily.

All such whistling, whether by lip or by *piki*, is done by men. Women rarely whistle, though they may do so to the same end as the men. If they do, it is considered all the more *mota*.

It could easily be explained by the Mbuti that the sound itself paralyzes the animals or the bees, and has this direct effect (and could so be more properly called magical), but they deny this strongly and say that the forest hears the *piki* and leads them to the bees or the game (or alternatively that the forest holds the bees and the game still for its children to find them).

In ordinary conversation, sounds are widely used to convey different ideas, a snap of the fingers indicating that the action being described was done suddenly, a high-pitched, drawn-out exhalation indicating it was done slowly. Wherever possible, the narrative is illustrated by imitations of the sound of the action described. Vowel sounds, unformed into words, are used in conversation similarly to heighten ideas, convey added emotion, to supply an element that would otherwise be missing and which is plainly of great importance to the Mbuti. For the forest is nearly always full of sound, and the Mbuti refer to this constant background by saying "the forest is talking" (*ndura a lufu*). The Mbuti listen, and interpret, and make use of what they hear. If the forest stops "talking," then it is a sign that something is very wrong and alerts the Mbuti to imminent danger.

It is not surprising, then, that sound so carefully controlled as song should be considered as *mota nengo, mota ngbekbekbei*, the "strongest" possible kind of sound, activated by the breath that is so mysteriously connected with *pepo*. Song is used to communicate with the forest, and it is significant that the emphasis is on the actual sound, not on the words. Frequently the mere vowel sounds are used, sometimes imitative of animals, birds or bees but more often simply to suit the melodic line of the song. When words are used they are most often trivial, and may be spontaneous and highly sketchy references to one or another event of the day. That the song is directed at the forest, and intended to awaken the forest, is most clearly seen in the *molimo* festivals, which are the Mbuti reaction to crisis. The *molimo* is named for the festival, for the society that performs the festival, and for the central and solitary piece of paraphernalia, the trumpet that echoes the song of the Mbuti on into the depths of the forest.

765 534 778 It is noteworthy, however, that the trumpet is not considered as sacred in itself, hidden though it may be. There was one instance when a trumpet was stolen by a member of a different family and a different band, simply because it had such a good "voice" and could sing so well. Whatever power it possesses it is believed to possess through the quality of its "voice." The fact that it can be stolen or lost (they sometimes get washed away in the floods that follow a particularly torrential downpour), without causing any ritual crisis, is in keeping with the lack of concern for inheritance of the trumpet. It is said by youths that anyone who wants to make one can have it, but that if they do not want to be bothered they need not, for "the *molimo* is a lot of work." Elders, however, say clearly that there used [613] to be one for each family, and by family they plainly defined a minimal lineage, all male members descended from a single living grandfather or from the same father, living or dead.

765 534 [611] [174] The fact that they also say that the *molimo* used to be the concern of the band only, perhaps indicates an earlier but now less pronounced emphasis on the principle of patrilineal descent; be that as it may, a noted feature of *molimo* festivals today is their utterly nonlineal nature (Tables 9 and 10).[1] With reference to the greater *molimo* held for Balekimito, there were at one time three *molimo* trumpets in action, only one of which belonged to a member of Balekimito's lineage, the second belonging to her son, the third to Kokoyo, whose wife's stepmother's brother was married to a woman of the same clan as Balekimito—a rather distant claim to lineage—but Kokoyo and Ekianga brought out their *molimo* trumpets because their *roho* wanted it. [621] Thus, by this means they emphasized the importance not of lineage membership but of membership of the band, and the *molimo*, as of old, was at least a band festival, if not a lineage festival.

765 621 771 778 181 182 A more systematic analysis in the next chapter shows the importance of the *molimo* festival as an integrating factor in Mbuti life, and indeed the importance of their whole religious system, based as it is upon a belief in the benevolence of a forest spirit or power. It can, for the moment, be seen clearly enough that it expresses among other things the latent antagonisms that exist between the sexes, because of the same lack of clear, formal sex delineations that characterize the *molimo* itself. It also unites the band (regardless of kinship considerations) in a common expression of the dependence of the Mbuti upon the forest, not only as an economic entity but also as a spiritual entity, a spiritual power that looks after their needs but which is also able to inflict hardship and punishment. The *molimo* heightens

[1] [see page 331 -- Analyst]

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the practical economic dependency of the Mbuti upon the forest, which is felt and acknowledged, by forcing an acknowledgment of the most basic dependency of all, that of life and death. The association with the festival of all the basic elements—fire, water, air and earth—and the central importance of food and sex, all combine to create a highly direct, personal and intimate relationship between the Mbuti and the forest, while at the same time binding them together as a band, the one individual dependent upon the next.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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Another important aspect of the terminology is that it does not differentiate between cognates and affines, and is used to include all, without any distinction of this kind. In an Mbuti hunting band, a hunter may well have a uterine brother hunting to one side of him and his uterine sister's husband to the other side. He depends on each equally for both success and for safety, and any preferential behavior, such as might be signified in another form of terminology, must be avoided. To distinguish between cognates and affines in the daily hunting and camp life of the Mbuti, as to distinguish between matrikin and patrikin, or even between kith and kin, on any grounds except age and locality, is not only needless, it is destructive of the sense of unity that is vital to the close cooperative nature of Mbuti economic and political life.

Mbuti personal terminology, as in the more conventional kinship systems, equally reflects interpersonal bonds, then, but they clearly cut across all strictly kinship considerations. This can to some extent be construed as a denial of kinship ties, and it certainly implies that such ties do not form the basis of social organization in the band. But it is better expressed as a lack of concern for kinship that, whatever its origins, is particularly well suited to one of the band's major objectives, the preservation of the greatest possible political distance between itself and the village. It will be readily seen that whereas lineage considerations would divide the Mbuti, the generational system, if considered vertically, effects the widest possible classificatory unity from which the villagers are absolutely excluded. But for the moment to keep to the forest context, the same unity is in perfect consonance with the nonlineal nature of the band, the unity of which any lineal system would destroy. Here we have to refer to one other usage of the same personal terminology; namely, when the Mbuti refer to themselves as *bamiki ba ndura*, the children of the forest. This, together with their habitual reference to the forest as mother and father, extends the nuclear-family model to incorporate the larger

père, père des pères; ou bien on se sert de termes qui remontent à certaines représentations mythiques, et dont le nombre est très élevè." ("Names attributed to the Godhead fall into two categories. Either one simply invokes the name *afa*, *bapapa* or *odu* . . . father, grandfather, or father of fathers . . . or else one uses terms that derive from mythological beings, of which there are a very great number.")

This indicates the same filial attitude to the forest that I found among the net-hunters. Among the archers, I myself most frequently heard *afa*, used with the same degree of affection as *ema* or *eba*. However, among the archers I equally often heard the forest (God) addressed as *ema* (mother), rarely heard *bapapa*, and never *odu*. My participation in the religious life of archer bands, however, was limited.

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is resident. It is seldom that he refers merely to geographical boundaries, for trespass, as seen, is rare and of little consequence. Yet it is a term he frequently uses, and as an organizational principle it is equal in importance to age.

While agreeing with Steward that the environment may to some extent be determinant as well as permissive of certain elements of social organization, I find it impossible to see the validity of his wider deterministic claims for cultural ecology.[5] But while Steward seems to have overreached himself, or rather overreached his material, in trying to draw up general principles of culture change, nonetheless in regarding cultural ecological adaptations as "creative processes" (1955, p. 34), his stress on cultural ecology as a particular factor is highly relevant to the Mbuti and in itself an important contribution. We have seen throughout the importance of the economic abundance offered by the forest, permitting economic independence to each band. While the presence of the village tribes is sufficient indication of the permissibility of cultivation, at the technological level of the Mbuti one might say that the environment determines hunting and gathering. It is certainly relevant to say that the Mbuti, at least, would agree with Steward, for they say it is the only way they can live, that if they cultivate they will die. The truth of their assertion is not relevant here; its importance lies in that it reveals the depth of their felt dependence upon the forest.

Nothing is gained, however, by saying that the Mbuti exploitative

[5] Indeed, it would be impossible to do so since Steward uses the Mbuti as an example of an ecologically determined patrilineal band, content to base his analysis on Putnam (1948) as interviewed by Carleton Coon and represented in a brief and obviously general and sketchy article. Steward's only other Mbuti reference is to Schebesta's preliminary seventeen-page field report in *Anthropos* (1931). A minimum of inquiry would have revealed numerous other sources, which while admittedly unsatisfactory would, through their very divergence, at least have demonstrated the inadvisability of relying on the two sources quoted (ref. Turnbull, 1965). Further evidence to support his theory, for the Central African Negritos, was drawn by Steward from the reports of Schmidt (1910) and Trilles (1932). Not one of the many articles in *Zaïre*, *Congo*, or *Kongo-Overzee*, is cited, nor is Schebesta's major work, *Die Bambuti Pygmäen vom Ituri*, nor the abridged and revised edition of that work which appeared in French in 1952, *Les Pygmées du Congo Belge*. Unsupported assertions such as that "the exploitative patterns produced the features typical of the patrilineal band" (Steward, 1955, p. 128) are bad enough; the apparent ignorance of major texts (for Steward nowhere gives any reasons for not using them) is worse; but still worse is the sheer misrepresentation of the facts he does claim to have at his disposal. Thus he claims that the populations he has selected to illustrate patrilineal bands—the Bushman, Congo Negritos, Australians, Tasmanians and Fuegians, "and others"—are similar "because the nature of the game and therefore of their subsistence problems is the same in each case" (1955, p. 38). It is difficult to see much similarity between subsistence problems of the Kalahari Desert and the Equatorial Rain Forest, even if they are on the same continent.

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patterns produce "features typical of the patrilineal band," for the patterns differ from group to group, and within each group from one time of the year to the next. At one time or another, each group, net-hunters or archers, will be able to present bands that resemble patrilineal units; at other times the same bands will be utterly nonlineal, even though the exploitative pattern may not have changed.

Nonetheless, the environment itself does play a vital structural role, and while not necessarily determining the exploitative activity, or the dependence of the Mbuti upon it, is determinant of their value system so long as that dependence is felt. For, feeling that way, regarding the forest as *ema* the provider, and as *eba* the ruler, believing that any deviation from the way of life ordained for them by the forest would be fatal, the Mbuti effect what control they can over their lives by a constant effort to "rejoice the forest."

Conceiving that the forest is intelligent, the Mbuti conceive that it is like them, and consequently the ideal that they hold for themselves is the ideal they attribute to the forest. While age and territory are effective in organizing the band, dividing it into significant units, binding it together as a whole, and determining the general nature of interpersonal relationships, the territory enlarged into the forest seen as mother and father acts as the ultimate sanction of all behavior. There are certain recognized forms of behavior that lead to a "good" band, and others that lead to a "bad" band. The appropriate positive and negative sanctions are formulated in such a way that all actions are either pleasing to the forest—leading to the ideal of *ekimi*, or quietness—or displeasing to the forest, leading to *akami*, or noise. (*Ekimi* and *akami* are, in practice, essential elements in determining the success or failure of the hunt.)

Thus it is recognized that cooperation is essential for the success of the hunt, so it is stated that laziness and aggressiveness and disputatiousness are all displeasing to the forest, leading to *akami* (as indeed they do). The *akami* is their own reward, for *akami* destroys the hunt and "kills" the Mbuti. On the contrary, to hunt well, to have a full stomach, to sing and dance, is to please the forest and lead to *ekimi*, or "quietness," and *ekimi* in turn brings good hunting, and is associated with singing and dancing and feasting.

Here is a very clear example of the closest possible association between religious belief and ethical behavior. The distinction made by Radcliffe-Brown (1952, p. 172) between law, morality and religion, upheld by legal sanctions, sanctions of public opinion, and religious

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sanctions, does not hold good for Mbuti society, where the three principles are inextricably fused. One might be able to talk of law, even if law implies sanction by force, for the Mbuti believe that the forest has such power and force and will use it. Indeed, in their experience it does, for transgression is met with the force of *akami*, which kills. This is thought of as a very direct and practical response on the part of the forest as the law. On the other hand, public opinion can hardly be said to exist, for there is no public spokesman, and every opinion on behavior is expressed in terms of pleasing or displeasing the forest. Such public action as may be taken—ridicule or ostracism—is taken in the name of the forest. Exile is literally being sent to the forest to meet it directly. Religious sanctions are not differentiated from any others; the threat is the same—noise and displeasure.

Ultimately, then, in our consideration of territory, despite the obvious practical values involved and a certain extent of ecological determination of behavior patterns, the territory as a principle of organization must be regarded as a religious principle. Indeed, life itself, for the Mbuti, can almost be regarded as a ritual designed to please the forest and secure *ekimi*. There is, as noted, an almost total absence of magic, and the only ritual that can be truly considered as such, and is not otherwise a necessary daily activity, is song. We have seen that song is designed specifically to rejoice the forest, and to draw its attention to its children, but beyond this and its reinforcement, through musical technique, of the values of age and cooperation, there is nothing particularly remarkable about it as a social institution.

It is only when we come to death that there is a marked departure from the normal tenor of life, and a ritual, the *molimo*, that might be regarded as a ritual in the Durkheimean sense of recreating society and reaffirming the social sentiment. While any interpretation of religious ritual of this kind is highly questionable, the attempt has to be made.

Leaving aside the "legal" aspect of the *molimo* when it appears in the early hours of the morning to wreak havoc in the camp, there are few rituals that could be more explicitly concerned with the "recreation of society" in the most literal sense. Death is the most final and inescapable of all crises, and for it there is no remedy. But it threatens more than the life of the individual; it threatens the continuity of the band, and so threatens the ritual of life by which the forest is pleased. Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted

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Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted with regret, but there is enormous concern to conceal the regret and avoid any excessive show of grief, for crying is *akami*. The uncomfortable fact of death has to be obliterated from the memory as quickly and effectively as possible, and the band, which has received a blow at its strength, must be rejuvenated in an exaggerated display of all the things pleasing to the forest—good hunting, singing, dancing, feasting and, above all, *ekimi*. More than this, the *molimo*, as we have seen, is a means of reaffirming the effective division of the band into age groups, and through both the participation of the old lady, who demonstrates the power of the women over the men, and through the *ekokomea* dance, the lack of sex differentiation is emphasized. *Ekokomea* may also be regarded in a similar light as the erotic dance over the fire, where the men symbolically copulate over the scattered embers, fanning them to life. Certainly the sexual act is represented in the *molimo* dances, if not in the symbolism of the *molimo* trumpet itself and the way in which it is handled, and there is very evidently expressed concern with the regeneration of life.

The *molimo* is also an occasion on which the band reaffirms all its interpersonal loyalties, and its unity as a band, regardless of kinship considerations. (This is not to deny that the band, and the *molimo*, may at one time have had a more definitely lineal structure.) It is significant that it insists on participation by all adult males, including not only affines but adult visitors living temporarily with the band under an obligation, default in which is punishable by death. Such death itself is said to be brought by the *molimo*; informants differed as to *how* death would actually take place—some said by two spears, some by beating—but in all cases it was held that the *molimo* would bring death to any who did not fulfill his obligations.

Thus the forest is intimately associated with the Mbuti at death, just as it is at birth. The same forest that gives life and strength through the juices of the vine, and through the vine and wooden charms tied around an infant's wrist, may bring death to that infant, if as an adult he fails to rejoice the forest during the *molimo* festival.

Fire, which is the gift of the forest, but whose ownership is disputed, is central in the life of the Mbuti, representing life itself. (One legend has it that fire was first owned by a chimpanzee; another by woman; another by the *keti*. In any case, man [Mbuti] ultimately stole it and now possesses it.) During the *molimo*, men pass their hands through the flames and then rub gently over their faces. The *molimo* trumpet is passed over the flames. Sometimes men put coals

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in their mouths, or hold them in their hands. Burning coals are put in the mouth of the trumpet. When the trumpet enters the camp at night it is preceded by a youth carrying burning embers which he waves in the air and touches to the ground to leave a trail of glowing cinders, the "footsteps" of the *molimo*. And of course the *molimo* fire is the object of attention of the old lady and her attendant. The final extinction of the fire is the signal for the return of the *molimo* to the forest, and the end of the festival.

The festival emphasizes and reaffirms everything of importance in the life of the Mbuti. And perhaps one of the most important things it emphasizes is accompanied by the least ritual—the closing of the path leading to the village. To the same end, but more dramatic, is the way in which a *molimo* festival will come to a complete halt if a villager comes to the camp. For the *molimo* not only reaffirms the unity of the band; it reaffirms the unity of the Mbuti in opposition to the village. It is essentially a "matter of the forest," and the entire system that it upholds operates only in relation to the forest.

In the same way that a solitary villager can transform a forest camp into a village camp, just by his presence, so is any contact between the two worlds, except one of opposition, impossible. The system that the *molimo* recreates in the forest, the very life of the Mbuti that in itself is a ritual of pleasing the forest, cannot persist in the village. The ritual closing of the path is clearly symbolic of the Mbuti concern to keep the village out of the forest, to keep the two worlds apart. When they, as individuals or as a band, leave the forest and visit the village, they do precisely that—they leave the forest. It is this opposition, which is so sharply defined in the *molimo*, that is the basis of the Mbuti relationship with the villagers.

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CHAPTER 16

Principles of Organization (2)

THE VILLAGE CONTEXT

The principles of organization that have begun to emerge with reference to the forest world of the Mbuti only become fully comprehensible when we relate them to the village world. Gluckman (1960) gave some general but highly pertinent indications of a somewhat similar situation involving a dichotomy in the lives of Africans in North Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In that situation the conflict, or rather the opposition, was between the ancestral land and the town. The land represented subsistence to some extent, but primarily security; the town was a place to raid for money. While Gluckman did not see any "detribalization" involved, he pointed out that the African is tribalized, in towns and in rural areas, in two different ways, tribal attachments in urban areas having to work within a setting of urban associations: "Hence the African in rural areas and in town is two different men; for the social situation of tribal home and of urban employment determine his actions and associations, within the major politico-economic system covering both areas" (1960, p. 11).

Gluckman refers to the consequent social and mental conflict, and sees "considerable resolution of this conflict through the separation of the spheres of activities" (1960, p. 11). In assessing the Forest/Village relationship we see a similar situation, with the village being regarded as a place to raid, creating numerous social and mental conflicts which again are largely resolved by separation in what I have called a system of indigenous apartheid. There is more to it than that, however. We cannot suppose, however complete the barrier, that the Mbuti live an utterly schizophrenic existence; even within the opposition there must be order. Nor can we suppose that the order comes from a mere dilution of forest values when the Mbuti come to the village; it is rather, as Gluckman says, that the same values have to work within a setting of urban (village) associations.

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Indeed, certain elements of the forest system can only be explained in relationship to the village context, such as the excessively fluid composition of the band and the almost paranoid attitude to a single villager passing through a hunting camp, sufficient to suspend the vital and central, all-important *molimo* festival, even at its height, or transform it into a village-style parody. This quite singular feature has found no explanation in terms of either the village alone or the forest alone. Let us then briefly review the forest system, and look at it again in the village context. The following elements have emerged as having the greatest structural significance:

1. THE BAND is the basic unit, its membership being influenced by economic rather than kinship considerations. Constant association and cooperative compatibility outweigh kinship even within the band in regulating the process of fission and fusion. This latter process is related to the annual honey season, but it is not determined by it. The over-all size of the band, or of its subsections, is, however, determined by ecological factors resulting in a maximum of about thirty nuclear families for a band, and a minimum of three families for a subsection. Although the band is nonlineal, the network of consanguineal and affinal interpersonal relationships is recognized to link all members, so that the terminology, while referring to age levels regardless of actual or fictive kinship, still has the same affective qualities of kinship terminology, the term referring to age mates (*apua'i*) being the most widely used, and the most effective.

With the best will in the world, it is not possible to apply the kind of analysis suggested by Lévi-Strauss (1958) for following his argument (that the biological family makes a poor starting point); further we must also abandon the affinal family and the system of affective relationships that Lévi-Strauss saw to pertain there. For among the Mbuti affective relationships are determined more by age than by kinship, consanguineal or affinal. We simply cannot follow a set formula that takes no account of the age factor. Thus *f/s* is positive when *s* is a child.[1] It is negative when *s* is a youth, becomes less strained when *s* becomes a hunter, but only approaches positive again when *f* becomes an elder. In other words the relationship is positive as long as *f/s* are not in adjacent age levels. The greatest friction arises when *s* approaches adulthood and is about to become a hunter, a signal for the retirement of the father into elderhood. It

[1] *f* = father; *s* = son; *m* = mother; *d* = daughter; *b* = brother; *z* = sister.

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the camp or on the hunt, and they also sometimes shout at a storm or at rain to drive away bad weather.

But more important than Mbuti recognition of the practical power of noise is their recognition of its social value. When they say it is the duty of the hunter age level to make noise, they mean just that, even though it is precisely noise that will negate the hunter's other duty, to hunt. The Mbuti do not connect the two duties—the one refers to the hunt, the other to camp life. It is in the camp that the hunter is expected to make noise; that is, to be disputatious. For the countervalue, *ekimi*, is only "quiet" and does not refer to silence (*kobinengo*), which is considered as an indication of great and imminent danger. A silent camp is considered a bad camp and the badness is destroyed by destroying the silence, which can be done in two ways. One is by singing, which is recognized as sound but only described as noise when it takes place in the village. Singing, as we have seen, is essentially a form of communication, even of communion, with the benevolent forest divinity. It destroys silence and "rejoices the forest" at the same time. But this is recognized as having only temporary efficacy. To strike at the roots of silence, one employs "noise" in the sense of argument, which is certainly its most common connotation.

Silence in a camp betokens unusual ill humor, which is common among the Mbuti when in their village camp, but not in the forest (except when the hunt is spoiled by rain). Disputes seldom remain hidden for long because of the intimate nature of camp life, but any length of time is too long, and when a camp is silent it is invariably the hunters who find some cause for "making noise." It matters little what they pick on, but it is preferably not the underlying dispute causing the silence. It may be directed at the cause if personal feelings run high, but then the hunters are criticized for making too much noise, *akami ndasi*. Youths and elders will alike shout at the hunters and tell them this, but the noise will not die down until the disputants have either come into the open with their dispute, putting it before the band, or have been forced to join together in some common but unrelated cause.

Thus there was an occasion on which Amabosu, for no evident reason, took to beating his wife, Amaloku, with unwonted vigor and regularity. A certain amount of wife-beating is considered good, and the wife is expected to fight back. But Amaloku was aware of the real reason for her husband's behavior, which was her own brother's

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the camp is filled with *akami*—not in search of *ekimi*, but in the hopes of doing as the hunters do, killing noise with more noise.

5. SONG brings us to the crux of the opposition between Mbuti and villagers, for all song in villages is by definition "empty," even if sung by Mbuti, and even if, as is rarely the case, the song is strictly Mbuti in origin. That is, while in the village the Mbuti no longer have the ultimate safeguard of being able to "rejoice the forest" through song. Even if they tried, it would be *bulé*. Song being directly associated with *ekimi*, it follows, and the Mbuti affirm, that there can be no *ekimi*, or "quiet," in the village. *Ekimi*, as stated, is the ultimate goal of the Mbuti, and it is only *ekimi* that can please the forest. Visiting the village, then, would be a treacherous act beyond reconciliation under Mbuti values if it were not for the Mbuti attitude to such visits as being a form of hunt, for hunting is pleasing to the forest, and hunting is also associated with noise and danger, *akami* and *mota*. The rationalization may seem a feeble one, but to the Mbuti it is adequate and convenient.

Thus while the more formal institutions of the band, age levels and territorial affiliation, work internally to achieve stability and externally to directly counteract village attempts to subordinate the Mbuti, so do forest values directly counter village values, maintaining the complete separation of the two peoples. The economic exchange that takes place, while undeniably mutually convenient, may also be in part a mere recognition of territorial propinquity and of mutual opposition, a mechanism for avoiding open hostility, which would otherwise be the only possible relationship.

The strongly forest-oriented value system of the Mbuti, while operating toward the maintenance of internal order, completely counters the attempts of the villagers to assert their dominance by supernatural sanctions based on village values. But the answer to the question as to why the Mbuti go to the extreme of allowing themselves to be circumcised and initiated by the villagers may be more than that offered by the Mbuti hunting metaphor.

The metaphor recalls the technique of a hunter in taking on the appearance (and smell) of his quarry, of rubbing himself with a paste made of the heart and brains and eyes of the animal so that he can feel and think and see like his quarry. It is not a technique widely practiced, though it *is* practiced by elephant hunters, and by some archers, and by elders who are out hunting on their own. It is more

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widely practiced in the mimetic hunting dances, by which it may be supposed that the dancer is trying, magically, to influence the action and movement of the game. In this light the Mbuti acceptance of the *nkumbi* seems more plausible, as a "magical" means of gaining power over the villagers. It is not entirely unlike the situation described by Beattie (1960, p. 78) for Nyoro reactions to foreign powers such as Europeans, Polish expatriates, and airplanes. The Nyoro attempt was to gain some control over the situation by becoming possessed by the spirits of these foreign powers.

There may also be a certain amount of seepage of village beliefs into the Mbuti subconscious, despite the formidable structural opposition they have raised to all such influences. There is certainly cause to think that the village beliefs of witchcraft and sorcery, confused as they are by the Mbuti, nonetheless have for them a certain sinister ring of conviction.[9]

It is perhaps for that reason that the only plainly discernible symbolism evident in Mbuti ritual is concerned with life. Of all the oppositions between the forest and the village, such as abundance/hunger, unity/disunity, moral/immoral, equal/unequal, cool/hot, song/silence, quiet/noise, the most significant are undoubtedly the last two, for silence and noise are associated ultimately with death. If the Mbuti suspect there are, in the village, supernatural powers with which they should come to terms, it is for purposes of defense. And they see their major defense in the power of their own supernatural, the forest.

Their desire is to counteract the forces of hunger, disunity, immorality, inequality, heat, silence and noise, forces that amount to death for the Mbuti. Their focus of attention is on the preservation and continuation of life. The relatively simple ritual, if it can truly be called that, of the *molimo* festival is supercharged with an emotional concern, a burning desire, for life. As might be expected, it reinforces those aspects of Mbuti society that require constant attention: age divisions are clearly symbolized in the three fires for the three upper age groups; the value of sharing (on nonlineal grounds!) is emphasized in the technical division of the songs, again bringing in division along age lines and demanding close cooperation; the reluctance to share is symbolized at the same time as the friction between youths

[9] Again, a linguistic study might help greatly, not only through separating institutions and concepts that derive from different tribes, but in revealing the location of hidden areas of forest/village opposition. Unfortunately we still lack any published studies of KiNgwana, KiBira and KiLesé, let alone of the divers Mbuti groups.

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and fathers when youths go around trying to snare food from each hut (the women ultimately letting them have it, often ostentatiously). The opposition of adjacent age levels, and particularly the hostility between sons and fathers, is plainly manifest in the morning rampages of the *molimo* trumpet. The forest itself is symbolized by the leaves that conceal the trumpet (itself the symbol of the life-giving organ), and *ekimi* is the avowed objective sought through song. *Akami*, its antithesis, is symbolized again in the morning rampage, frequently a physical battle between older and younger youths (dividing brothers) and between youths and hunters, and always a wordy battle, with the hunters winning if for no other reason than that there is a limit to the energy even of Mbuti youths.

Thus the *molimo* admirably reinforces social values and allows for the harmless expression of hostility in areas of conflict. The only symbolic representation of sexual conflict is *ekokomea*, and of course the fire dance. But here the symbolism runs deeper, and concerns the ultimate end, for just as *akami* is associated with death, so is *ekimi* associated with life. The fire is not as realistically symbolic as the trumpet, though it is undoubtedly as feminine as the trumpet is masculine. But it is impossible not to be reminded of other instances of the use of fire and sex symbolism.[10]

And perhaps we should see this concern with life not only in terms of the threat of death from the village. Death is a threat to all societies, and for the Mbuti it is probably the one imperfection in an otherwise perfect life; that is to say, it is the one thing for which they have no certain answer, and to a practical people such as the Mbuti uncertainty is imperfection.

Ultimately the efforts of the Mbuti, if not of their system, are directed to keeping the villagers physically out of the forest, an effort that is successful largely because the villagers are only too thankful not to have to go into the forest. But just the fact that one villager can set up a fishing camp in mid-forest and be visited by other villagers, or that a chief can send his representative to a hunting camp to demand (but not necessarily obtain) meat, means that even the forest

[10] For instance, Audrey Richards (1956) writes of the Bemba that access to the ancestral spirits is to be had through the correct handling of fire and sex, and stresses (*ibid.*, p. 30, *seq.*) the ritual association of sex, blood and fire as the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behavior of the Bemba. Hocart would certainly have seen the *molimo*, and the "baptism of fire" (when Moké passes his hands through the flames and rubs them over his face, then gently touches the hands of all those around), as a request "for the gift of undying life" (Hocart, 1952, p. 47).

132 Anyone who has THE FOREST PEOPLE
137 stood in the silent emptiness of a tropical rain forest must know how Stanley and his followers felt, coming as they all did from an open country of rolling plains, of sunlight and warmth. Many people who have visited the Ituri since, and many who have lived there, feel just the same, overpowered by the heaviness of everything—the damp air, the gigantic water-laden trees that are constantly dripping, never quite drying out between the violent storms that come with monotonous regularity, the very earth itself heavy and cloying after the slightest shower. And, above all, such people feel overpowered by the seeming silence and the age-old remoteness and loneliness of it all.

132 But these are the feelings of outsiders, of those who do not belong
137 to the forest. If you *are* of the forest it is a very different place. What
182 seems to other people to be eternal and depressing gloom becomes a cool, restful, shady world with light filtering lazily through the tree tops that meet high overhead and shut out the direct sunlight—the sunlight that dries up the non-forest world of the outsiders and makes it hot and dusty and dirty.

136 Even the silence is a myth. If you have ears for them, the forest
137 is full of sounds—exciting, mysterious, mournful, joyful. The shrill
182 trumpeting of an elephant, the sickening cough of a leopard (or the
825 hundred and one sounds that can be mistaken for it), always makes your heart beat a little unevenly, telling you that you are just the slightest bit scared, or even more. At night, in the honey season, you hear a weird, long-drawn-out, soulful cry high up in the trees. It seems to go on and on, and you wonder what kind of creature can cry for so long without taking breath. The people of the forest say it is the chameleon, telling them that there is honey nearby. Scientists will tell you that chameleons are unable to make any such sound. But the forest people of faraway Ceylon also know the song of the chameleon. Then in the early morning comes the pathetic cry of the pigeon, a plaintive cooing that slides from one note down to the next until it dies away in a soft, sad, little moan.

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Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

THE WORLD OF THE FOREST

There are a multitude of sounds, but most of them are as joyful as the brightly colored birds that chase one another through the trees, singing as they go, or the chatter of the handsome black-and-white Colobus monkeys as they leap from branch to branch, watching with curiosity everything that goes on down below. And the most joyful sound of all, to me, is the sound of the voices of the forest people as they sing a lusty chorus of praise to this wonderful world of theirs —a world that gives them everything they want. This cascade of sound echoes among the giant trees until it seems to come at you from all sides in sheer beauty and truth and goodness, full of the joy of living. But if you are an outsider from the non-forest world, I suppose this glorious song would just be another noise to grate on your nerves.

The world of the forest is a closed, possessive world, hostile to all those who do not understand it. At first sight you might think it hostile to all human beings, because in every village you find the same suspicion and fear of the forest, that blank, impenetrable wall. The villagers are friendly and hospitable to strangers, offering them the best of whatever food and drink they have, and always clearing out a house where the traveler can rest in comfort and safety. But these villages are set among plantations in great clearings cut from the heart of the forest around them. It is from the plantations that the food comes, not from the forest, and for the villagers life is a constant battle to prevent their plantations from being overgrown.

They speak of the world beyond the plantations as being a fearful place, full of malevolent spirits and not fit to be lived in except by animals and BaMbuti, which is what the village people call the Pygmies. The villagers, some Bantu and some Sudanic, keep to their plantations and seldom go into the forest unless it is absolutely necessary. For them it is a place of evil. They are outsiders.

But the BaMbuti are the real people of the forest. Whereas the other tribes are relatively recent arrivals, the Pygmies have been in

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

the forest for many thousands of years. It is their world, and in return for their affection and trust it supplies them with all their needs. They do not have to cut the forest down to build plantations, for they know how to hunt the game of the region and gather the wild fruits that grow in abundance there, though hidden to outsiders. They know how to distinguish the innocent-looking *itaba* vine from the many others it resembles so closely, and they know how to follow it until it leads them to a cache of nutritious, sweet-tasting roots. They know the tiny sounds that tell where the bees have hidden their honey; they recognize the kind of weather that brings a multitude of different kinds of mushrooms springing to the surface; and they know what kinds of wood and leaves often disguise this food. The exact moment when termites swarm, at which they must be caught to provide an important delicacy, is a mystery to any but the people of the forest. They know the secret language that is denied all outsiders and without which life in the forest is an impossibility.

The BaMbuti roam the forest at will, in small isolated bands or hunting groups. They have no fear, because for them there is no danger. For them there is little hardship, so they have no need for belief in evil spirits. For them it is a good world. The fact that they average less than four and a half feet in height is of no concern to them; their taller neighbors, who jeer at them for being so puny, are as clumsy as elephants—another reason why they must always remain outsiders in a world where your life may depend on your ability to run swiftly and silently. And if the Pygmies are small, they are powerful and tough.

How long they have lived in the forest we do not know, though it is a considered opinion that they are among the oldest inhabitants of Africa. They may well be the original inhabitants of the great tropical rain forest which stretches nearly from coast to coast. They were certainly well established there at the very beginning of historic times.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

and very shallow. For the first time we slowed to a walk and stepped through the bubbling water, lifting our feet high so as not to splash. The forest was silent now, except for the evening chorus of crickets and frogs, and on the far side of the stream we halted while Ausu and Makubasi looked around and listened, to reassure themselves that we were alone.

I had no idea of how far we had come or in what direction, but I knew we had left the camp far behind. It was the first time I had known a group of Pygmies to be so silent. Normally, unless hunting, they are deliberately noisy, but now, just at the time that leopards would be prowling about in search of food, they seemed unwilling to disturb the forest or the animals it concealed. Just the opposite, in fact. It was as if they were a part of the silence and the darkness of the forest itself and were only fearful lest any sound might betray their presence to some person or thing *not* of the forest.

They stood there, quiet and still, and it struck me with a sudden shock that not one of them carried a spear or bow and arrow. As they peered into the dusk and cocked their heads first on this side then on that, satisfying themselves that we were really alone, it seemed that they felt themselves so much a part of the forest and of all the living things in it that they had no need to fear anything except that which was not of the forest. One of them said to me, later, "When we are the Children of the Forest, what need have we to be afraid of it? We are only afraid of that which is outside the forest."

We stood there, water from the stream still running down our legs, until they were satisfied that all was well. Then Makubasi nodded to Madyadya and to another boy. They ran on ahead, and after a whispered discussion two others followed. The rest of us walked slowly on until we came to a small clearing nearby, the far side of which was only just visible as the last glimmer of daylight dwindled away into blackness. We stood there waiting, saying nothing. Ausu and

THE SONG OF THE FOREST

Makubasi wandered about aimlessly, poking here and there from habit to see if there was any tasty fruit to be had for the picking, but it was too dark to see.

Just as I was about to ask where the others had gone they reappeared, announcing their presence with low whistles that sounded like the call of a night bird. They were in two pairs, each pair carrying between them, over their shoulders, a long slender object. Even at that moment I wondered if they would veer off into the complete blackness of the forest before I could see more closely, but they came on toward us. Madyadya was carrying the rear end of what proved to be a huge tube of some kind, fifteen feet long. He gestured proudly and said, "See, this is our molimo!" Then he turned and putting his mouth to the end of the trumpet, which it was, he blew a long, raucous raspberry. Everyone doubled up with laughter, the first sound they had made since leaving camp.

I was slightly put out by this sacrilege and was about to blame it rather pompously on irreligious youth, when I saw something that upset me even more. I do not know exactly what I had expected, but I knew a little about molimo trumpets and that they were sometimes made out of bamboo. I suppose I had expected an object elaborately carved, decorated with patterns full of ritual significance and symbolism, something sacred, to be revered, the very sight or touch of which might be thought of as dangerous. I felt that I had a right, in the heart of the tropical rain forest, to expect something wonderful and exotic. But now I saw that the instrument which produced such a surprisingly rude sound, shattering the stillness as it shattered my illusions, was not made of bamboo or wood, and it certainly was not carved or decorated in any way. It was a length of metal drainpipe, neatly threaded at each end, though somewhat bent in the middle. The second trumpet was just the same, shining and sanitary, but only half the length.

Everyone was looking at me to see what my reactions would be.

115 But, most important, he told me, or rather
778 showed me, how the Pygmies believe in the goodness of the forest.
• 182 "The forest is a father and mother to us," he said, "and like a
181 father or mother it gives us everything we need—food, clothing, shelter, warmth . . . and affection. Normally everything goes well, because the forest is good to its children, but when things go wrong there must be a reason."

I wondered what he would say now, because I knew that the village people, in times of crisis, believe that they have been cursed either by some evil spirit or by a witch or sorcerer. But not the Pygmies; their logic is simpler and their faith stronger, because their world is kinder.

Moke showed me this when he said, "Normally everything goes well in our world. But at night when we are sleeping, sometimes things go wrong, because we are not awake to stop them from going
[136] wrong. Army ants invade the camp; leopards may come in and steal a hunting dog or even a child. If we were awake these things would not happen. So when something big goes wrong, like illness or bad hunting or death, it must be because the forest is sleeping and not
[533] looking after its children. So what do we do? We wake it up. We wake it up by singing to it, and we do this because we want it to awaken happy. Then everything will be well and good again. So when our world is going well then also we sing to the forest because we want it to share our happiness."

115 All this I had heard before, but I had not realized quite so clearly
778 that this was what the molimo was all about. It was as though the
776 nightly chorus were an intimate communion between a people and
781 their god, the forest. Moke even talked about this, but when he did
182 so he stopped working on his bow and turned his wrinkled old face to stare at me with his deep, brown, smiling eyes. He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very

[i.e. Moke - analyst]

much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest."

The complete faith of the Pygmies in the goodness of their forest world is perhaps best of all expressed in one of their great molimo songs, one of the songs that is sung fully only when someone has died. At no time do their songs ask for this or that to be done, for the hunt to be made better or for someone's illness to be cured; it is not necessary. All that is needful is to awaken the forest, and everything will come right. But suppose it does not, suppose that someone dies, then what? Then the men sit around their evening fire, as I had been doing with them for the past month, and they sing songs of devotion, songs of praise, to wake up the forest and rejoice it, to make it happy again. Of the disaster that has befallen them they sing, in this one great song, "There is darkness all around us; but if darkness *is*, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be good."

As Moke looked at me and spoke I wondered if this was how he had once explained things to his own son. Now I began to understand what happened at night when fifteen feet of drainpipe was carried into the camp and someone blew or sang into it; and I began to understand what the "presence" was—it was surely the presence of the Forest itself, in all its beauty and goodness.

Moke turned back to his bow and began whittling again.

"You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you. But you must stay awake—you may see them only once."

He started humming to himself, and I left.

765 Even though he[1] always
578 made his camp a short distance off it was close enough to be thought
152 of as the same camp, and whether or not we appreciated his presence
621 we thought of his camp and ours as being the same. Even his unwillingness to take part in the molimo was accepted, to maintain some semblance of unity; but this sudden statement made it impossible to ignore Cephu's feeling of rivalry any longer. Rather than cause an open breach, everyone in the main camp kept his thoughts to himself and was silent.

224 About an hour after dawn, four or five youths with their nets and
372 spears went off to light the hunting fire. I went with them, and only when we had crossed the Lelo and were on the other side did they speak. Then it was about trivialities, and soon they were chatting and laughing as though nothing were wrong. Shortly afterward we were joined by half a dozen of the younger married men, the most active hunters, and we lit the fire at the top of the hill. Leaves and twigs were piled around the base of a young tree, and an ember brought from the camp set them ablaze. More leaves were thrown on so that dense clouds of smoke went billowing up to the invisible sky, until finally the flames burst through with a great roar of victory.

[182] There was no great ritual or ceremonial, but somehow this act put the hunters in harmony with the forest and secured its blessing and assistance for the day's hunt. The Pygmies regard fire as the most precious gift of the forest, and by offering it back to the forest they are acknowledging their debt and their dependence.

224 As we sat around waiting for the others, one or two couples passed
[222] by. They were going ahead so they would have extra time for gathering mushrooms on the way. They paused to chat and then walked
224 on, lightly, swiftly, and gaily. Before long the main body of hunters
372 arrived and asked where Cephu was. We had not seen him. It
578 seemed that he had left the camp shortly after us but instead of
156 passing by the hunting fire had followed a different path. Someone suggested that he was building a fire of his own. This brought cries

[1] [i.e., Cephu. - Analyst]

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765 the men rearranged themselves at the kumamolimo without making
562 any mention of what had happened.

I looked at Moke, and found him staring at me curiously. He understood my question and nodded. Yes, this was what he had told me I was yet to see.

765 There is an old legend that once it was the women who "owned"
562 the molimo, but the men stole it from them and ever since the
793 women have been forbidden to see it. Perhaps this was a way of reminding the men of the origin of their molimo. There is another old legend which tells that it was a woman who stole fire from the chimpanzees or, in yet another version, from the great forest spirit. Perhaps the dance had been in imitation of this. I did not understand it by any means, but somehow it seemed to make sense.

562 The woman is not discriminated against in BaMbuti society as she is in some African societies. She has a full and important role to
462 play. There is relativeiy little specialization according to sex. Even the hunt is a joint effort. A man is not ashamed to pick mushrooms and nuts if he finds them, or to wash and clean a baby. A woman is free to take part in the discussions of men, if she has something relevant to say. In fact, it was the apparent absolute dominance of the male in the molimo that had seemed to be the exception.

562 But now even in this the woman had come into her own. She had
372 asserted her prior claim to the fire of life, and her ability to destroy
182 it, to extinguish life. Or had she been destroying it? Perhaps when she was kicking the fire out in all directions among the menfolk she was giving it to them, for them to gather and rebuild and revitalize with the dance of life.

765 I was trying to puzzle it all out when the singing started again,
533 and I saw that the old woman had returned, alone. All the others were in their huts, and the men seemed to be singing as though by their song they could drive the last remaining female away. They sang louder and harder, but she kept circling the kumamolimo, keep-

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either a pith helmet decorated with gennet skin, or else a long-haired wig of monkey fur. In his hand he carried a metal walking stick that had once been the handle and stem of an umbrella. Sometimes he wore the gennet skin around his waist, or tucked into his belt, or hung from his neck. It was the symbol of his ritual authority, and it contained the charms from which he derived his power. Generally Sabani was a kindly and gentle man, wise and good. But his loyalties were narrow, confined to his own kin and a few friends. Beyond that circle he was a man to be feared rather than trusted.

Eboyo also had its Pygmy village, not far from the main village, but Sabani preferred to keep his Pygmies in the forest where the administration could not see what they were doing. Generally they were tending illicit plantations, of hemp among other things. Sabani also had his own still, where he used to have a powerful spirit made from manioc. He was frequently drunk but never incapable. At all times he was an imposing and commanding figure. In his village there were some thirty families, including Kapamba's. Camp Putnam and Dar es Salaam were about half that size.

The attitude of all these villagers to the forest was the same. They made their villages as open as possible, and they built their houses without any windows. They tried to ignore the world around them, because for them the forest was hostile, something to be feared and fought. Even after cutting it down there was the constant labor required to keep it from growing back. It was filled with evil spirits that cursed the soil so that although it would bear gigantic mahogany trees it would produce only the most meager fruits for the villagers.

The tribes of this area had once been plains dwellers, with herds of cattle, living in the friendly open spaces of East Africa. When they were driven into the forest by more powerful tribes, they brought as much of their plains culture with them as they could. But their cattle died off, and they had to live by cultivation alone. They

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herself with her hands, wiping off all the beautiful decorations so laboriously painted on her body by her friends. When the singing ended and the girls retired for the night, Akidinimba was still as decorative as when she first appeared, but Kidaya was just a mass of streaked and dirty gray. And there were tears in her eyes.

During the last week the elima battles reached their highest pitch, both sides making the most of the opportunity while it lasted. The elima was, on the surface, a pretty happy-go-lucky affair, and what went on inside the hut was best left to the imagination. But in fact it all had a very definite purpose, and was closely supervised by the watchful eyes of Asofalinda and Mambunia. For the Pygmies, the elima is not just a puberty rite for girls; it is a celebration of adulthood, and just as much for boys as for girls. For Akidinimba and Kidaya certain physical changes had taken place which marked them as women, but for boys there are no such self-evident changes. They have to prove their manhood. Village boys do this by entering the initiation schools, but even though Pygmies enter the same schools, it is for a different purpose, quite unconnected with adulthood as they see it. For them the elima serves the purpose, or at least a part of it.

In the elima, the boy has to show considerable courage to fight his way into the house, after he has been invited. In the last week the women maintain constant guard outside, and they are well supplied with all sorts of ammunition. If they want to keep any particular boy away from their daughters they are perfectly capable of doing it. And when a boy finally succeeds in breaking his way through he still has to face a possible beating from the girls inside. If he has not been invited by having been beaten beforehand, he will certainly have to go through it now.

As well as this, in order to prove himself a man, the boy has to kill "a real animal." That is to say, not a small one, such as a child might kill, but one of the larger antelopes, or even a buffalo, so prov-

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ing that he is not only capable of feeding his own family but also able to help feed the older members of the group who can no longer fend for themselves.

Once a boy has gained access to the elima hut he may flirt or even sleep with the girl who invited him. The elima gives an opportunity for boys and girls to get to know each other intimately, and such friendships often end in marriage. On the other hand, it gives two lovers a chance to discover that they are unsuited to each other before becoming betrothed officially. From what I was told, by older men and women as well as by the bachelors who took part in this elima, it is even possible to have intercourse, but with certain restrictions. These restrictions must be effective in preventing conception, because nowhere have I ever heard of a girl becoming pregnant in an elima house. A boy may sleep with a girl only if she consents. The tacit consent of her mother has already been given by his having been allowed to gain access to the elima house. If he sleeps with her then he must not leave the house and has to stay there until the festival is over, subject to the same restrictions as the girls. But he may decide on just a mild flirtation. Or he may—and this is considered a master move—simply turn around and leave the house without having paid the slightest attention to any of the girls. Whatever happens, there are always young women, such as Kondabate, to keep an eye on their younger companions and see that they do not get into trouble.

The conclusion of this particular elima was an anticlimax. The Pygmies are not a ritualistically minded people; to them the important thing about any festival is that they should openly express their emotions and accept the realities of whatever situation the festival marks. Instead of living in constant fear of the spirits of the dead, performing elaborate rituals to remove the souls of the departed as far away as possible and as quickly as possible, the Pygmies sing in their memory for months on end, during the molimo. And so,

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during the elima, they sing to celebrate the blessing of potential motherhood conferred on the fortunate girl or girls. The month or two that the festival lasts gives them time to adapt themselves to the new situation, but they have no need for elaborate ritual acts. When the girls appeared that night and sat down with the women, and sang with them before all the camp, that was a formal public acknowledgment of their new status as women. And yet the elima dragged on for several days afterward.

Part of the reason, of course, was that if they ended with a feast, in the tradition of the villagers, the villagers would be so pleased that they would probably contribute most of the food. And so it was in this case. For all other practical purposes the elima had come to an end the night they sang together. But the girls had another reason; they wanted to placate the villagers. Sabani in particular had been extremely upset about the nonorthodox way this elima had been conducted. He, and many others, felt it was wrong for the girls to go wandering about from village to village, sometimes sleeping overnight in camps several miles away. This was unheard of. It was, to the villagers, as though a colony of lepers were wandering at large. But even more they resented the liberties the girls took with village custom. There is a certain dress that village elima girls are meant to wear, because the special leaves of which it is made have the magical power of protection; other dress is ineffective and invites disaster. The Pygmy girls, however, found that the ineffective leaves were far more attractive. As they themselves said, "This plant makes such pretty skirts; why should we make ourselves ugly with that plant? This is a time to rejoice." They also liked to imitate the village boys' initiation, and this so infuriated, and worried, the village traditionalists that they threatened to invoke the most powerful curses on all the girls. And so the girls put on a traditional ending, village style, to appease them.

On a Sunday morning they came out of their house as soon as

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impunity gives severe stomach disorder to the Pygmy, who is used to the fresh clean water of forest streams. Flies and mosquitoes carry germs unknown to him in his natural home. But above all, his entire code of behavior and thought is geared to his nomadic forest life: to bring him to a settled life in a village is to ask him overnight to abandon one way of life, a way he has lived for thousands of years, and adopt another. Where the Pygmies did make the attempt there was complete moral as well as physical disintegration. Not long ago a Belgian friend from the Congo told me that the day before he had left, on one small "model plantation" where the Pygmies were being liberated, twenty-nine had died in one day from sunstroke.

I spoke about the plan to many Pygmies, and when Kenge got back to Epulu he talked as much about it as about anything else that he had seen on his journey to the outside world. Old Moke summed up the attitude that I had found everywhere. "The forest is our home; when we leave the forest, or when the forest dies, we shall die. We are the people of the forest."